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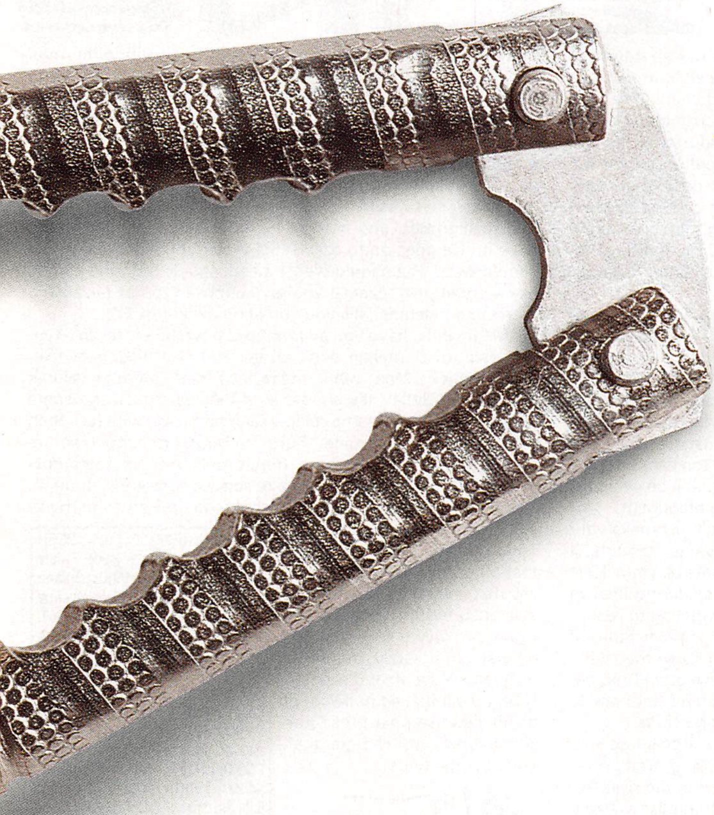
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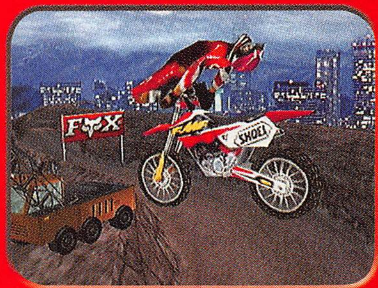


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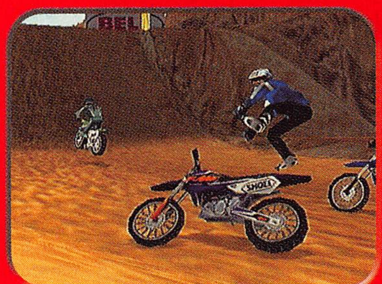

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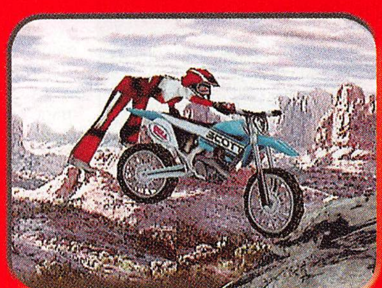
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Ah, the lazy days of summer are upon us—that time of year when even the most pasty-faced gamer goes outside for his or her annual look at the sun ("Yep, it's still there... back to *Resident Evil*"). Unfortunately, along with the long days and extreme temperatures come the inevitable summer doldrums—that ugly spell in which the only games you play extensively are the ones that were released last year that you never really got around to playing as much as you might have liked during the bankruptcy-flirting holiday shopping binge ("Hey look, my credit cards have stopped hemorrhaging—thanks, Mr. Loan Shark... now for some more games...<grin>").

And why are you just now pulling out games that you passed over the first time around? Because new releases (or, at least, releases any sane person would want to play) are few and far between—it's true for you, and it's true for game mag editors. However, this summer heralds the dawn of a new age, an age in which the big releases aren't reserved merely for the end-of-the-year, big-name release orgy that usually accompanies the Christmas season... Nope, now you too can Shun the Sun™ and bask in all the gaming goodness that'll be available prior to the customary 4th-quarter marketing bloodbath!

This summer release extravaganza doesn't just make your Fourth of July shopping trips more enjoyable, though, it makes our jobs a lot more fun (it certainly beats playing "Hide Fury's Multi-Thousand Dollar Rims" in the blistering heat of The Valley) and our magazine a lot more interesting to read... Which helps me segue nicely into my semi-annual State of GameFan address. Yes, hide the kids, batten down the hatches and brace yourselves for some introspective gibber-gabber so that I can fill this installment of Ed Zone and get back to *Power Stone 2* (O.K., a PS2 binge of epic proportions).

How are we doing, people? Based on the large surge in e-mail and snail mail of late, I gather we're doing pretty well. I'm not exactly sure why my e-mail's doubled in the past few weeks, but I'm not complaining—there's nothing like walking into a virtual flood of correspondence every morning (if I haven't responded to you yet, Dad, just know that I'm still alive and am digging myself out)...

We've gone through great pains to make sure that this is a mag every fan of video gaming would want to read, while still maintaining what got us here in the first place—namely, honesty (as brutal as that may be sometimes). Other mags and websites purport to give you, the gamer, nothing but the "unbiased truth," but I find more often than not that they're just as eager to cater to what's 'cool' as to what's actually good—but buying into hype and what other people think only does the reader a massive disservice.

Yet, judging by some of the more heated mail I've received, a number of you seem a bit bent out of shape about this policy. One fellow in particular (whose letter is featured in this month's Posty) was irked that we only rated *Perfect Dark* in the mid to high 80s, and not the high 90s that our competition gave it. He goes on to assert that if everyone else likes it, so should we... But should we? I mean, should you, the gamer, like a game just because you're "supposed to" or because a marketing machine tells you you should? I think not...

Meanwhile, have you ever noticed how the scores in a typical issue of GameFan don't all fall into one nice, neat five-point range? Most other magazines' staff member scores deviate very little. It's almost as if they've cloned the same person to write the same review over and over, with less than a 10% difference in grade. Sure, it's bound to happen sometimes, but when the same high-profile games seemingly **always** fall into the same range of scores, something's rotten. It also tells me that somebody's not being up-front with themselves, let alone readers...

So now that I've gotten that off of my chest, let me just say that if we give you nothing else each month, at least (and I guarantee) we give you the honest, completely unfiltered truth as we see it, and no marketing machine, ad page count or all-expense-paid press junket is going to change that. You deserve better...

Editorial Director
Eric Mylonas

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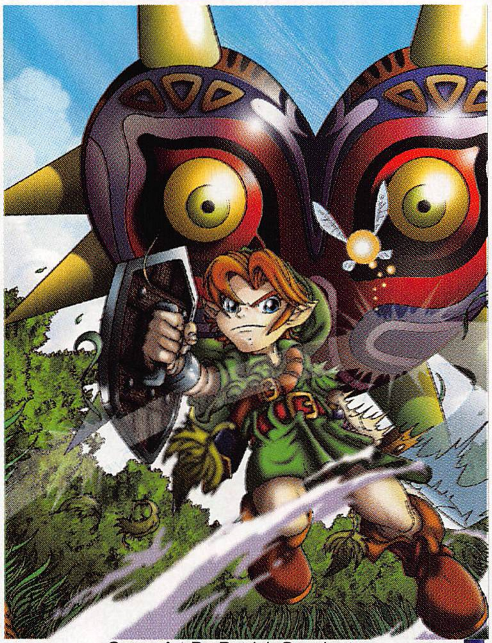
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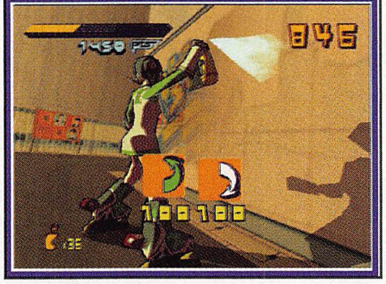


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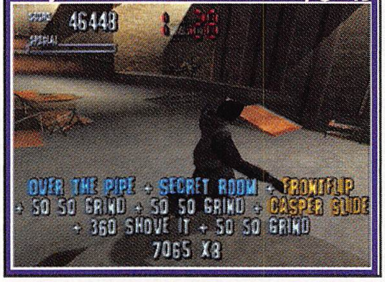
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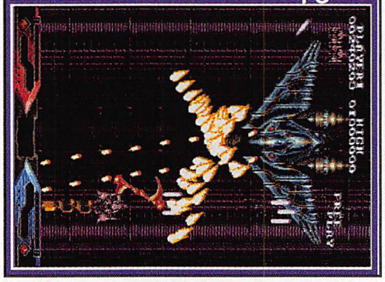
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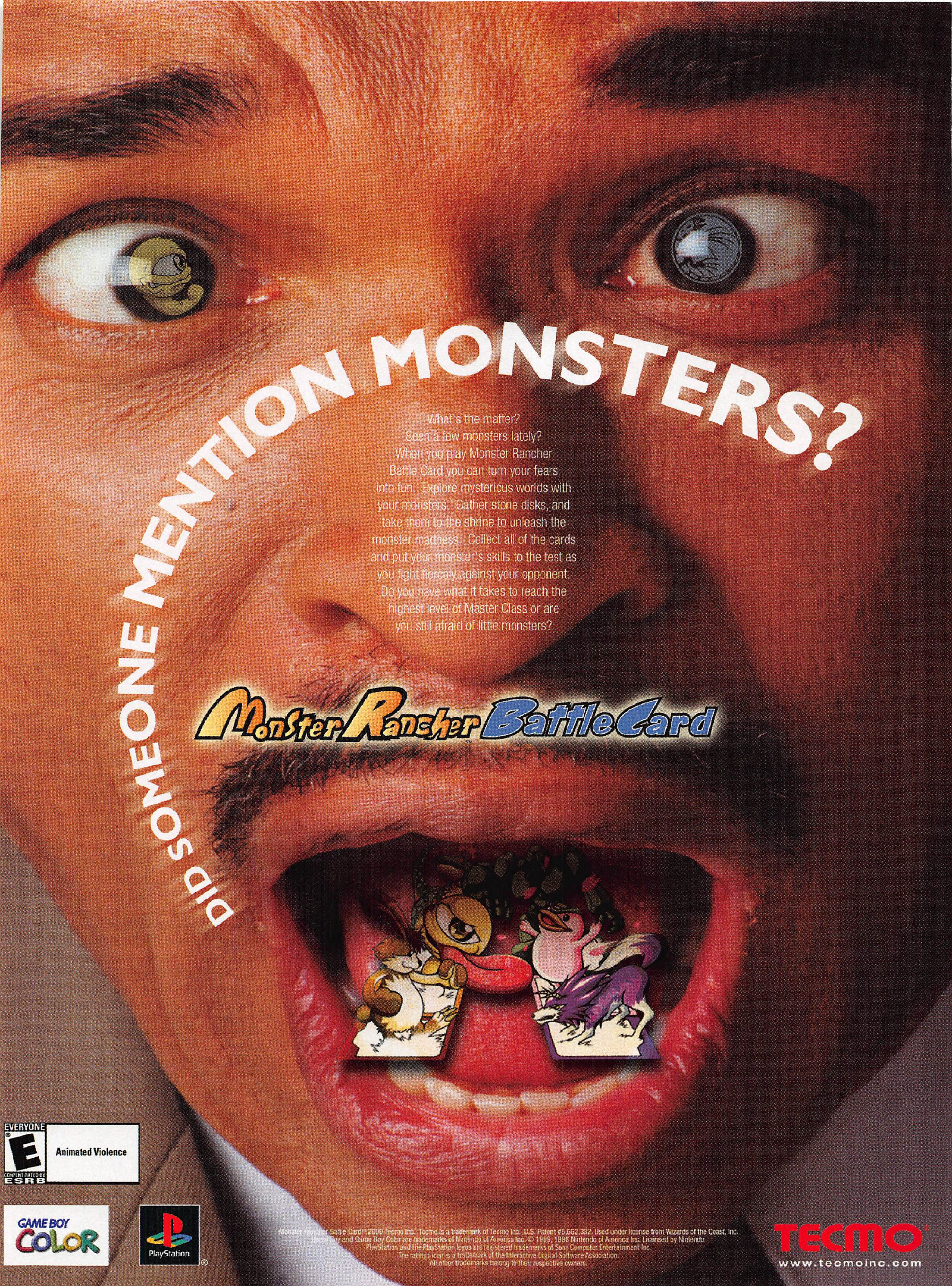


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TOP TEN MOST WANTED

July 2000

ZELDA: MAJORA'S MASK

PUBLISHER: NINTENDO



READER'S TOP TEN

1) *RE: Code Veronica* - DC
2) *Dead or Alive 2* - DC
3) *Syphon Filter* - PS
4) *MDK 2* - DC
5) *Wild Arms 2* - PS
6) *Soul Calibur* - DC
7) *Crazy Taxi* - DC
8) *Pokemon Stadium* - N64
9) *NFL2K* - DC
10) *Tony Hawk* - N64

RE: CODE VERONICA



READER'S MOST WANTED

1) *Zelda: Majora's Mask* - N64
2) *Marvel Vs. Capcom 2* - DC
3) *Tekken Tag Tourn.* - PS2
4) *Perfect Dark* - N64
5) *Phantasy Star Online* - DC
6) *Shen Mue* - DC
7) *Vagrant Story* - PS
8) *Power Stone 2* - DC
9) *Virtual On* - DC
10) *Onimusha* - PS2

GAMEFAN EDITORS' TOP TEN

*IMPORT TITLE



1) *Zelda: Majora's Mask** - N64
2) *Power Stone 2** - DC
3) *Dimahoo* - Arcade
4) *ESPrade** - Arcade
5) *Strider 2* - PS
6) *Marvel Vs. Capcom 2* - DC
7) *Doshin The Giant** - 64DD
8) *Hybrid Heaven* - N64
9) *Alien Soldier** - MD
10) *R-Type Leo** - Arcade



1) *Jet Set Radio** - DC
2) *Tekken Tag Tourn.** - PS2
3) *Power Stone 2** - DC
4) *Eternal Arcadia** - DC
5) *RE: Code Veronica* - DC
6) *Ridge Racer V** - PS2
7) *Quake II* - PC
8) *Front Mission 3* - PS
9) *Get Colonies** - DC
10) *Worms: Armageddon* - DC



1) *EverQuest* - PC
2) *Worms: Armageddon* - DC
3) *Unreal Tournament* - PC
4) *Ecco: Def. of Future* - DC
5) *Get Colonies** - DC
6) *Tekken Tag Tourn.** - PS2
7) *Strider 2* - PS
8) *Tony Hawk 2* - PS
9) *Power Stone 2** - DC
10) *Marvel Vs. Capcom 2* - DC



1) *Samba de Amigo** - DC
2) *Snatcher* - Sega CD
3) *Dracula X** - PC Engine
4) *Streets of Rage* - Genesis
5) *E.V.O.* - SNES
6) *Wonderdog* - Sega CD
7) *Gunstar Heroes* - Genesis
8) *Gunbird 2** - DC
9) *Monster Farm Battle Card** - PS
10) *Ghostbusters* - C64



1) *Zelda: Majora's Mask** - N64
2) *Tekken Tag Tourn.** - PS2
3) *Kirby 64** - N64
4) *Power Stone* - DC
5) *Ridge Racer V** - PS2
6) *Berserk: Gut's Rage* - DC
7) *Marvel Vs. Capcom 2* - DC
8) *Eternal Arcadia** - DC
9) *Powerstone 2** - DC
10) *ESPrade** - Arcade



1) *Ridge Racer V** - PS2
2) *Zelda: Majora's Mask** - N64
3) *Samba de Amigo** - DC
4) *Monster Rancher 2* - PS
5) *Crazy Taxi* - DC
6) *Worms: Armageddon* - DC
7) *Kirby 64** - N64
8) *Air Force Delta* - DC
9) *Tony Hawk* - DC
10) *Gradius III & IV** - PS2

GAMEFAN EDITORS' TOP TEN MOST WANTED



- *Phantasy Star Online* - DC
- *Grandia 2* - DC
- *Jet Grind Radio* - DC
- *El Dorado Gate* - DC
- *Munch's Oddysee* - PS2
- *OniMusha* - PS2
- *Guilty Gear X* - PS
- *Metal Gear Solid 2* - PS2
- *Zoe* - PS2
- *Sonic Adventure 2* - DC

(In no particular order)

DEVELOPER'S TOP TEN

THIS MONTH'S GUEST:
JEFF BARNHART
PRODUCER, CRAVE ENTERTAINMENT

1. *Street Fighter 2: CE* - Arcade
2. *Zelda: Ocarina of Time* - N64
3. *Counter Strike* - PC
4. *Half-Life* - PC
5. *Descent* - PC
6. *Quake 3* - PC
7. *Gran Turismo* - PS
8. *Hero's Quest* - PC
9. *Doom II* - PC
10. *Resident Evil* - PS

STREET FIGHTER 2: CE



PUBLISHER: CAPCOM

I went to work for Interplay Productions in 1995 as a tester, and quickly learned that the harder you worked the quicker you'd move up in the company. After a couple months I was the lead tester on *Descent*, and a few other fun games. I later moved into their start-up sports department as a Line Producer, eventually becoming an Associate Producer. Then, after lots of hard work, I was handed my own project to Produce. It was a lot of fun, and I learned more than I ever imagined I could. Working at Interplay was really good experience because we had both internal and external development. I was able to Produce titles that were developed in house where I could manage internal teams, while at the same time I was also able to work with and meet interesting developers all around the world. I came around full circle on my career at Interplay when I was given the project *Descent 3*. Now at Crave Entertainment, I just shipped a PSX game called *Galerians*, *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* for the Dreamcast, and I'm about to finish *Draconus: Cult of the Wyrm* for the DC as well. Another project I'm working on right now that I'm really excited about is *Ultimate Fighting Championship* for the Dreamcast and PSX.



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EDITOR ROUNDUP

In less than a month, we'll be reveling in the joys of E3 (the Electronic Entertainment Expo) North America's biggest video game trade show. All the key figures of the industry will be there, along with every company showing off their future lineups for the rest of the year. Below is what we're looking forward to most at the show...

ecm@gamefan.com



ECM

ECM eagerly awaits the second coming of Sonic Adventure on the DC, *Jet Grind Radio*, and anything on Game Boy Advanced. That last one gives him a chance to warm up the ol' 2D soapbox rants you all know and love. =/

ghiggins@gamefan.com



THE JUDGE

The Judge is anticipating to be wowed by Sega's lineup, the wonders of the X-Box, and a really memorable (if he can) Sony party. He won't admit it, but we know he wants to dress up as a Lizard Man from *Ruins of Kunark* to get the number of that High Elf booth babe...

eggo@gamefan.com



EGGO

Eggo's top 3 most wanted games are all PS2 titles: *Onimusha*, *Ninja Gaiden*, and the new *Metal Gear*. We also caught him mumbling something about "setting up camp at the Tecmo booth." But I thought he didn't really like *Dead or Alive 2*? Something's fishy...

fury@gamefan.com



FURY

Fury is counting the days till he can play *Phantasy Star Online* with gamers all over the world. Can you imagine, though? Japanese gamers will be puzzled when the game's translator says, "Dude, OK, dude... like I got these rad new rims for my Prelude yesterday."

kodomo@gamefan.com



KODOMO

Kodomo is chomping at the bit for some *Jet Set Radio*, *Onimusha*, and scantily clad booth babes (sorry, don't think those will be "playable"). He's also "looking forward to alcohol-fueled parties and losing 5 pounds... bulemia-style." Uhh, too much information...



THE 6th MAN

The 6th Man is looking forward to one thing at E3... a really good PlayStation 2 game. What?! Could it be he's jaded with gorgeous games like *TTT*, *RRV*, and *DoA2*? No, he's just tired of playing *Shogi*, *Mahjongg*, and *The Matrix* on his PlayStation 2.



THE ART DEPARTMENT

reubus@gamefan.com



REUBUS

Reubus can't wait to check out the latest crop of... booth babes?! Ehh, why not. Who's gonna walk away from a picture-taking opportunity with Lisa Boyle and Patricia Ford, right?

tao@gamefan.com



TAO

Tao's excited about E3's parties. Four nights of drunken frolicking, music, and dance. Though the rest of us aren't so excited about being near him the next day... "Did any of that land on you?"

core@gamefan.com

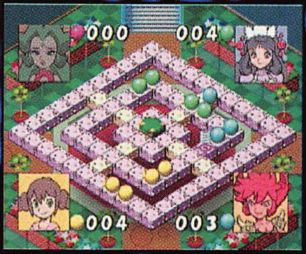


CORE

Core wants to see some surprises at E3, while catching up with old friends, some old not-so-friends, and lastly, spend some time with *Jet Set Radio*. Mullets beware, Core is coming for you!!

PRODUCTIVITY KILLER OF THE MONTH

Get Colonies!



Height: n/a
Weight: n/a
Blood Type: O
Special Abilities:
"D'oh!" eliciting

Puzzle games... now there's a genre that sees few superstars, but when one comes by, we stop and pay homage to it. Take, for example, the recently-released niche Dreamcast import title *Get Colonies* (reviewed within). This game is the epitome of great gameplay and simple graphics. Like Othello, it's one of those "minute to learn, lifetime to master" puzzlers out there that had us lining up for days to play. The Judge was the main one handing out the smackdown, accompanied by some pretty serious trash-talking. And through it all, not an ounce of work was accomplished (ahh, just what we look for in our productivity killers...). It just goes to show, game developers, that you don't need a title with eye-popping graphics, hypnotic music, or wicked CG to hold our interest long. Sound gameplay is all you need... though extra heapings of eye candy doesn't hurt! Now if we could only get a U.S. publisher to pick up this game... and change the name, of course. "Get Colonies" doesn't quite have that ring which compels you to buy or pre-order a game.

This month in GameFan's BOX-O-FUN!

Poor, poor Vega



Nobody likes to see a loved one hurt... but it's even worse when we're talking about a video game character. In this case, Cerberus' Vega action figure. One day he just walked into work and his jaw dropped. Poor, poor Vega lay mangled on the floor by his desk. His formerly-gleaming torso had been severed completely from his lower body, and his once-beautiful golden locks had been shorn clean from his head. What sort of nefarious villain would do such a horrible thing to Vega? Hushed whispers grew and suspicions abounded, but no one came forth admitting to the dastardly deed of disfiguring this prized action figure. Well, Eggo plays Dhalsim, so we know he doesn't care much for Vega... Perhaps it was ECM, fearing that Cerberus would attempt to infringe on his action figure monopoly... Or could it be newcomer Core, taking out his frustrations at continually losing to Kodomo in *Tekken Tag Tournament*? Whoever the culprit is, he has remained hidden. We can only suspect... that there is a traitor among us... who has a grudge against feminine, vain *Street Fighter* bosses from Spain. Luckily, we have some pretty good plastic surgeons (no pun intended) in Los Angeles, and Vega's only a few hair transplants shy of being restored to his classic, smiling visage. Let's just hope that the Video Game Mangler does not strike again... What could his next target be? Eggo's one-legged inflatable Cactrot? Fury's prized *Strider* figure? Tao's beloved Suezo plush doll? Or ECM's talking Iron Giant ("Hoooooooogarth... friend!")? We pray that we've seen the last of these grisly acts...



CHICKEN OF THE MONTH

Excitebike Racing Shirt

Nothing screams chick magnet like a sponsor-dripping Motocross racing shirt... unless you're talking about our Chicken of the Month. Thank you, Nintendo, for sending us this really cool-looking racing shirt, in commemoration of the release of *Excitebike 64*. However, for some reason, we feel that women would balk at the sight of an overweight, video game sausage decked out in this baby (yes, it's a large). Sure, it's got real sponsors, including the illustrious The Edge Racing, embroidered all over it, but that gigantic Nintendo "N" is a bit garish, considering it's the centerpiece on both the front and back. Not to say that we won't wear this puppy. You can bet we'll be proudly strutting like peacocks when we wear this shirt out on the town... "That's right... You see this game? I played it before it came out. <wink> Minoru Arakawa (the president of Nintendo)? Yeah, I had a drink with him the other day..."



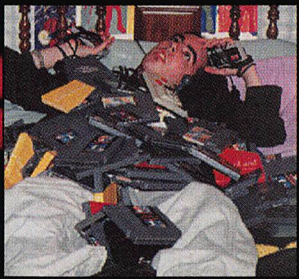


SAUSAGE OF THE MONTH





Pat Lazarus Murray has a vision. He wants to build a monument to Mario—a 7-foot tall Mario statue—using only NES cartridges of *Super Mario Bros.* Ever since he found out Funcoland was selling the game for the whopping price of a nickel, he's been cleaning out every store he comes across. Currently, he has scrounged together over 200 copies of this NES classic and is hoping to amass a collection sizable enough to build that statue. If you want to help him meet that goal, you can E-mail him at LazarusOfTheHalo@hotmail.com. Want to be Sausage of the Month? E-mail Posty your picture and story of how you're a super hard-core gamer! Then just open up the magazine one day to see your sweet mug staring back at you.



VIEWPOINT











G — Graphics
C — Control
P — Play Mechanics
M — Music
O — Originality



4 Wheel Thunder
Dreamcast
Midway
Racing
Reviewed page 34


Gibber, mumble, drool, change pants... these are just a few of the 'thoughts' I went through when I first got a look at Midway's new monster! Kalisto's been using the Power VR chipset longer than anyone else and it shows. Blistering, eye-shattering 60 fps animation coupled with blazing speed. While gameplay takes a solid back-seat to graphics, you're not going to complain. A tough game that deserves a very strong look.

G 10 C 7 P 7 M 6 O 7 — **88**


When I first saw this game move, my jaw dropped. Kalisto has created one monster of an engine here with *4 Wheel Thunder*—the best game from Midway in a long time. Everything about it screams quality. Great visuals and sound, coupled with a rock solid 60 fps. There are a ton of racing games on the Dreamcast, but only a few deserve your time... this is one of them. Too bad they're off-road vehicles, as opposed to cars.

G 9 C 8 P 8 M 9 O 7 — **89**


Yee-haw, time to break out the monster truck, stow the cooler of Milwaukee's Best and start the nitrous-fueled madness (That's the trucks, not the drivers by the way). Truth be told, I prefer rally racers for the dirt scene, but *4WT* has given me new hope. Sure, it plays like *Hydro Thunder* on dirt, but this is a fast, clean and fun game. Best of all, Midway actually listened to various editors' cries, and toned down the difficulty level to human level. Good job!

G 10 C 9 P 10 M 8 O 9 — **93**



Gauntlet Legends
Dreamcast
Midway
Action
Reviewed page 35


OK, I loved old school *Gauntlet*... but who didn't? This update, while immediately accessible isn't something I could get overly worked up about... might have something to do with the fact that the arcade game is over **4 years old** (eek!). The game looks dated and it doesn't seem to play as well as the coin-op from which it's spawned. Good on N64 (barely)... bad on Dreamcast. A rental, at best—stick with *4 Wheel Thunder*.

G 5 C 6 P 6 M 5 O 5 — **69**


Day One, I liked *Gauntlet Legends* in the arcade. By Day Five, the honeymoon was over; novelty and nostalgia gave way to mindless tedium. Now I'm staring at another console version of the game, and it doesn't even look as good as the arcade game. I'm glad there's bits and pieces of *Dark Legacy* here, because hopefully that means we won't see that half-assed sequel at home. *Gauntlet* was fun, *Legends* is far from it.

G 6 C 7 P 5 M 6 O 6 — **64**


Call me crazy, but I actually like this game. I didn't get much chance to play it in the arcade (what with my important job of driving a forklift in a warehouse), but rest assured that had said quarters been in my mitts I would've given it a go. My one gripe is the panning of the camera, but the ability to create a character, then choose between different jobs later (á la *Shining Force*) offsets this. A good party game that's worth the purchase.

G 8 C 7 P 8 M 8 O 7 — **82**



Tony Hawk Pro Skater
Dreamcast
Crave
Skating
Reviewed page 37


A text book example of "we need this on the market yesterday so don't screw with it." While I won't go so far as to say it was as rushed as games like *Soul Reaver* and *Tomb Raider* (among many, many others) I will say that it's a far cry from the early renders Crave crowed that were merely "touched up dev kit shots"--from what? 6 SGIs running in parallel? It plays just like the king, but I think we all expected a little bit more, right?

G 8 C 9 P 10 M 6 O 7 — **78**


Oh boy, Tony and company receive the expected DC facelift and as I suspected, I'm left far from impressed. If you've sat down with the DC rev of *Soul Reaver*, you know exactly where I'm coming from—this is the exact same game I played on PS and later on the N64. Look, it's really simple: Why would I play through this thing three times? Besides, no track editor (as seen in *THPS2*) or the hyped four player mode. What gives NS?

G 8 C 8 P 6 M 7 O 6 — **82**


Damn. Eggo writes before me and (just like when everyone sends me to 7-11 and then orders food) I'm left out in the cold with nothing to show for my effort. Everything he said is true. *TH* is a great game, but the lack of new and exclusive DC features, make this appealing to those who haven't played the PS or N64 one (all 3 of you out there). Still, if you want the best looking and playing skateboarding game ever, look no further than this game.

G 8 C 9 P 9 M 8 O 8 — **85**



Nightmare Creatures 2
PlayStation
Konami
Action
Reviewed page 42


Since Konami no longer makes real games, they have to go out of house for their publishing fix (hey, I'm as big a fan of the *BeMani* games as the next guy... <snort>). While Kalisto came through big time for Midway on *4 Wheel Thunder*, it looks as if they've pulled a fast one on Konami: that's right, kill DC *Castlevania* and give us this as a as 'make up.' Being one of the few that LOVED the big K's N64 efforts (games for gamers—minus the first *Castlevania*), this hurts... a lot.

G 4 C 4 P 4 M 6 O 8 — **55**


Seventy words are not enough to articulate my anger. The animation is great, but it's sadly wasted on a mindless, hack-job, pathetic excuse for a game. It feels unfinished, the gameplay is terrible, attacks are limited, control is nightmarish, strategy would help, and finding fun is impossible. Rob Zombie and a cool theme aren't enough to save this one. And what's with the buckets of gratuitous blood? Someone put a stop to this, please...

G 5 C 4 P 3 M 5 O 7 — **49**


I'll tell you precisely why I didn't like the original *NC* and now, its devilish sequel: The Saturn had a ton of better looking and playing beat-'em-ups and years later the DC follows suit with *Zombie Revenge*, *Dynamite Cop* and to a much lesser extent *Gauntlet Legends*. But hey, if you want a game that delivers gory *Splatterhouse*-like gameplay and at the very same time shows just how well the PS hardware has aged, please be my guest.

G 6 C 7 P 6 M 6 O 5 — **71**



Duck Dodgers
Nintendo 64
Infogrames
Platformer


Duck Dodgers is, at best, an average 3D platformer on a system that's swamped with games in this genre. The Warner Bros. license doesn't warrant an extra look... not with *Banjo-Tooie* coming this summer. Also, the camera spins around and jiggles a lot more than it needs to. After 10 minutes of playing this game, I had a headache and was ready to puke all over the controller from nausea... Suffering succotash!

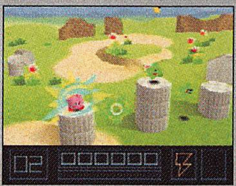
G 7 C 7 P 5 M 7 O 4 — **68**


As much as I like Paradigm as a developer (where's my *Pilotwings 64 2?*), and enjoy how well they craft environments (*DD* certainly being no substitute) there is no way around the fact that their latest opus is far from a fun game. How in the world could I recommend this platformer over its stellar competition like *DK64* and the upcoming *Banjo-Tooie*? I understand making a kids' game simple but not boring. This license deserves better!

G 8 C 6 P 5 M 7 O 5 — **74**


I don't exactly know when a platformer became synonymous with running around the landscape and looking for a certain object, but it disturbs me. The graphics do a good job bringing back memories of old, but suffice it to say that I've had my fill of finding atoms. I've certainly seen worse licensed games (can you say Superman 64?), but you can bet your last token that this one will go straight from my desk to my mom, the casual gamer.

G 8 C 7 P 7 M 7 O 8 — **72**



Kirby 64
Nintendo 64
Nintendo
Platformer
Reviewed page 52

I watched Fury struggle with this game for 2 days, and then sat down and beat it in 3 hours. It's certainly not a bad game, and it does have a stylish manner and some really cool abilities, but it's not fun for very long. This thing is selling like mad in Japan, beating every PS2 and DC game out, but I just can't get into it. If you're a fan of *Yoshi's Island*, *Kirby* will satisfy you with solid, quirky fun--just don't expect the second coming of *Mario 64*.

G 8 C 9 P 9 M 9 O 8 **85**

Score one for 2D gameplay! The Japanese took the time away from buying music games, *Super Robot Wars*, and horse racers to purchase *Kirby 64* and make it an unqualified success. If it weren't for the easiness and length of this game, I'd definitely recommend a purchase. Instead, it should top your must-rent list. Also, the gameplay is a bit on the slow-paced side, but this is one of the few N64 games I'm excited about.

G 7 C 8 P 9 M 8 O 6 **88**

Yes! Kirby returns in style. OK, OK, the game is so easy that even Fury could beat it in under a week (while the rest of us beat it in under 3 hours) but that doesn't stop it from being a raucous, fun-filled, 3 hours. However, if you're brave enough and dare to complete the game 100% I'd say there's enough here for 3 long nights... maybe. It looks good, plays really well, and hell, it's Kirby! After all, he's one tough... you know...

G 8 C 8 P 9 M 8 O 8 **89**



Driving Emotion Type-S
PlayStation 2 (import)
Square
Racing
Reviewed page 73

How are gamers expected to go from playing the incredible *Ridge Racer V* to this weak attempt at an import racing sim. Two words—*Racing Lagoon*. That title alone should make gamers weary of any upcoming Square racers. While Reubus digs on the not-so-user-friendly handling, I call it shoddy programming on the frenzy. Lets see, apply a little gas and yup, I've careened into a wall for the hundredth time today... no thanks.

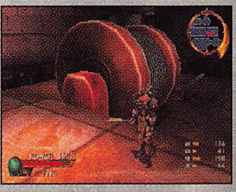
G 6 C 4 P 6 M 7 O 5 **65**

I told Kodomo to take a screenshot saying "Wrong Way" for this game, because that's what you see whenever someone plays this game for the first time. The learning curve is incredibly steep, although it can be overcome eventually. I choose not to bother. With competition on the PS2 like *Ridge Racer V* and *Gran Turismo 2000* (coming soon), there's no need to spin your wheels with this blasé racer. I'll pass... on the right.

G 7 C 2 P 6 M 7 O 6 **70**

Ya know, it does my heart good to see that just because the world thinks the PS2 is simply going to take over the universe it isn't going to do it with this month's crop of titles (and that's putting it mildly). Racing games are about as generic a genre as there is these days and *DETS* does little to change that. Super-realistic racing action (urgh, my favorite) that'll have you facing the "wrong way" 90% of the time. Think this is coming to the States? Hahaha...

G 7 C 1 P 1 M 7 O 5 **49**



Ever Grace
PlayStation 2 (import)
From Software
Adventure

It's unbelievable, I can't even say this game is better looking than *Vagrant Story* or even *FF8* for that matter. I know it's a first gen game, after all, but this is bad. Poor RPG fans—it's either this or *Eternal Ring* and who wants to play a PC port anyway? And check this out, when your character runs or fights his power meter decreases, what's up with that? From Software must like the DC better, cause there ain't no PS2 version of *Frame Gride*.

G 7 C 6 P 4 M 3 O 5 **60**

When I played this at the PlayStation festival in Japan, I had more fun with From Software's other game—*Eternal Ring* (eek!). Thankfully, *Ever Grace* has improved since then... but it's still one of the worst PS2 games yet. Check out the laundry list of problems: slowdown, shoddy collision detection, pop-up, grating music, shimmering textures galore, a slacking frame-rate, and a big doughnut on the fun-factor scale. At least it controls alright...

G 3 C 7 P 5 M 2 O 6 **57**

Next on the chopping block <pushing the headless corpse of *DETS* aside>, *Ever Grace* showed a lot of promise... in screen shots. Then you get your hands on the aliased death that it really is. OK, forgetting just for a moment that the visuals hurt to gaze upon, what action adventure game lacks a hero that can swim, duck, or even run without losing energy—oh yes, it's always a slippery slope trading attack power for running speed...

G 6 C 5 P 4 M 5 O 5 **59**



Gradius III & IV
PlayStation 2 (import)
Konami
Shooter
Reviewed page 84

Now, this is quite perplexing. I'm tempted to say that this is nothing more than a cash run (hoping to fleece money from certain obsessive shooting fanatics, but who's gonna opt for a 16-bit game (with a solid intro) on a 128-bit system? Oh hey Fury, ECM... At any rate, this was a good game when I was in high school, but then again, I had a mullet and thought I was the coolest thing in the world... but I digress. Avoid this game at all costs.

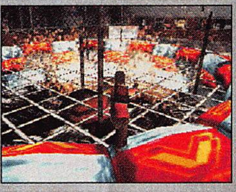
G 4 C 5 P 5 M 3 O 5 **47**

Just when I start liking shooters again, *Gradius III & IV* comes out. Yikes! Besides looking ancient (there are far better looking shooters on 16-bit), it's horizontal (that's a strike in my book, as vertical scrollers are the way to go) and the gameplay reminds me of *R-type* (argh! Strike Three!). I laugh when I recall ECM saying he wouldn't buy a PS2 till *G3&4* came out. With the crop of crap we've seen this month, he still doesn't own one.

G 3 C 6 P 5 M 5 O 3 **61**

...and the hits just keep on coming. Just so everybody knows, I **was** going to buy a PS2 for this game... <shudder>. When the previous installment in the series (*Gradius Gaiden* on PS) absolutely CRUSHES its younger sibling, you know something's rotten in Tokyo. This game is a wreck, make no mistake about it. What kills me is that it sold better than both *Giga Wing* and *Gunbird 2* on DC combined... am I missing something?

G 4 C 5 P 5 M 5 O 5 **55**



Sky Surfer
PlayStation 2 (import)
Idea Factory
Surfing

Ok, since I'll never have the courage to actually try this (why jump out of a perfectly good airplane?) I guess the closest I'll come is this... wait, scratch that— I'd never play *Sky Surfer*. Other than resembling a PS game, *SS*'s gameplay is lame... basic button combos that lead to some stupid maneuvers. This obviously was originally planned for the PS and somehow made its way to the PS2. Import fiends, avoid this game at all costs!

G 6 C 5 P 4 M 5 O 8 **50**

PS2? More like PS Poo. Every review you'll read on this game trashes it... and for good reason. The gameplay is shockingly shallow/nonexistent. All you need is five minutes before you'll want to retch... or kill someone at Idea Factory. Tricks require no skill, the graphics will make you go blind, and the fun factor is right up there with getting a root canal. You know it's bad when the combined viewpoint scores don't add up to 100...

G 2 C 2 P 1 M 3 O 10 **21**

I'm running out of negatives to say about PS2 games this month, but if it makes you feel any better, this is the worst of the lot (yep, I'd rather play *0 Story*... hmm, how apt a title). There is no game here! Fall through an empty sky surrounded by clouds (that's all the graphics you get, greedy gamer) all the while entering Parappa-esque commands on your Dual Shock, watching hopelessly as you plummet straight into the ground. Come to think of it, it's a lot like Fury's love life—minus the Dual Shock...

G 1 C 0 P 0 M 6 O 9 **17**



0 Story
PlayStation 2 (import)
Enix
FMV

Okay, I'm the resident Japanese sausage, but even I have my limits. Sure, I'll sit down and devote weeks to a dating sim, but this just isn't a highly evolved sim, it's more fmv madness. If you are intent on brushing up on your Japanese skills (not to mention getting your fill of gratuitous shower scenes) you've got 2 options. Part with 80 bucks for a game that you'll only play once or just watch the international channel. I'll take the latter.

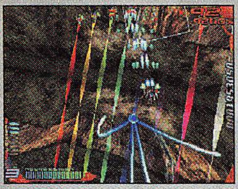
G 4 C 5 P 2 M 4 O 5 **45**

FMV games—obscure, campy, riddled with bad acting, little gameplay, and zero replay value. I admit *Zero Story* is a guilty pleasure. I had fun with it for about a day, though it shouldn't take you more than two to beat it... then it'll rest on your shelf to collect dust next to *Sewer Shark* and *Night Trap*. The quality of the FMV is DVD-caliber (i.e., awesome), so it's definitely worth at least seeing. Rent it if you can, but don't even consider a purchase.

G 8 C 4 P 4 M 5 O 7 **71**

Hey look! An honest-to-god FMV game in the year 2000... and I thought they breathed their last with the insipid *Fox Hunt* (why Capcom, why?!). Only this time there's a twist that only a Japanese developer could bring to the equation: It's a wacky dating-sim type game mashed together with that obscure PC Engine game *Photograph Boy*. Yep, I thought this was the worst it was gonna get this month... turns out it's only second worst—lucky Enix.

G 8 C 0 P 0 M 7 O 7 **36**



Ray Crisis
PlayStation (import)
Taito
Shooter
Reviewed page 85

Hey look, the sequel to a shooter that wasn't very good to begin with. If you're one of the people that liked *Ray Storm* you clearly have no idea what you're really missing. Might I suggest you flip to the 'Shooter Alley' section of the mag to see what real men play? Anyway, it looks spectacular but it plays like *Ray Storm*... only not as good. Too much lock-on and not enough gunning action make for a busted experience—skip it!

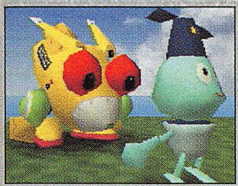
G 9 C 7 P 4 M 4 O 5 — 70

Here's a perfect example of just because its a shooter doesn't mean it'll be good. While the bosses are really cool, and the action is definitely intense, the number of levels in *Ray Crisis* is just depressing. And what's up with the lock-on system? Players need to rely on it way too much and its definitely not implemented nearly as well as Raizing's *Soukyugurentai*. Taito and Konami sure dropped the shooter ball this month!

G 7 C 8 P 6 M 6 O 6 — 73

Okay, shooting novices, bear with me. Popping in this game reminds me more than a little of *Silpheed*'s FMV backgrounds, but I must admit it's a good thing. With massive robots walking the land below you, as smaller ships circle and shoot, you are forced to think on 2 levels (*Xevious* style) and still react to everything thrown at you. Maybe I don't know enough about shooters to join my colleagues in slamming it, but I think it's a solid game.

G 8 C 7 P 8 M 9 O 7 — 81



Robbit Mon Dieu
PlayStation (import)
SCEI
Platformer
Reviewed page 74

Wow... blast from the past. A very early PlayStation game, *Jumping Flash*, gets its second sequel, and it looks just like the original. This is pretty disconcerting when 128-bit graphics are no longer as eye-opening as they used to be. At least the gameplay's still sound, and it makes you think once in a while. Yet in a vicious 3D platforming environment where *DK64* and *Banjo-Tooie* are playable, it's easy to lose *RMD* in the shuffle.

G 4 C 7 P 8 M 6 O 6 — 71

Robbit Mon who? Oh, you mean *Jumping Flash*... why didn't Sony just say so in the first place? A sequel, hardly! Try the same ole' stuff we've been offered with *JF 1* and *2*. Man, I can't even say "well at least the graphics have been updated" cause their the same as the first JM (which in itself was a first gen PS game). While this is easily one of Sony's better properties, you'd never know it by the lack of time spent on it.

G 5 C 8 P 7 M 6 O 6 — 70

I was a fan of the first game, appreciating the originality of *Jumping Flash*. Unfortunately, it hasn't aged well and little has been added throughout the series. It's still a quality game, but the problem is that it still feels exactly like the first game. In the 5+ years since since *JF*, I expected a little bit more. Still, you'd definitely be better off opting for this game than spending it on the likes of bad PS2 games such as *Sky Surfer*, *Type-S* or *Ever Grace*.

G 6 C 6 P 8 M 8 O 6 — 68



Umiharakawase Shun
PlayStation (import)
Publisher
Platformer
Reviewed page 71

Enthralling! That's the only word I can think of that really describes just how mesmerizing *Umi* really is. Though we got this one in months ago, we didn't get around to really playing it till recently—and what a nice surprise it was! Super-skilled gameplay oozes from every crevice of this disk—also makes a nice sub for this month's PS2 games. Super-sweet, *Bionic Commando* meets *Worms*' Ninja Rope gameplay—now to find a copy of the Super Fami original...

G 6 C 9 P 10 M 7 O 10 — 92

Capcom, hear our cries... This game reminds me of the classic *Bionic Commando* like no other. I like the difficulty and skill required to play it (note I'm avoiding the tongue-twisting title at all costs), though the theme of a schoolkid with a backpack doesn't really do it for me. Solid 2D gameplay, thoughtful puzzles, and good ol' classic platforming reborn. Now can we please get a new *Bionic Commando*... that's not on Game Boy?

G 7 C 8 P 9 M 7 O 9 — 82

Okay, I 'traded' this one to Fury and now I must eat some humble pie and admit that it's a good game. Umi accepts all skill levels from the novice to the turbo grappler (just watch a demo to see how skilled you might one day become) and the only down-side is that you must do some amazing things to advance (which, Fury actually did). It's not my cup of tea, but for the retro-feeling gameplay it succeeds quite well and is worth a serious look.

G 7 C 8 P 8 M 7 O 9 — 84



Final Fight Revenge
Sega Saturn
Capcom
Fighting
Reviewed page 76

I played *FFR* in a Japanese arcade, despite my friends urging me not to. How bad could it be, right? Well, I've never felt more ripped off than when I spent 100 yen on this turd—one of the worst fighting games ever! An insult to *Final Fight*, as well as the Saturn. Even if you collect Saturn games, leave this one out. I didn't listen to my friends, but you should listen to me—avoid it like your life depended on it. If you see it, just scream and run!

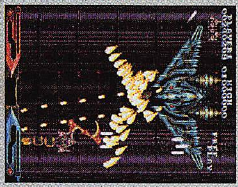
G 2 C 4 P 1 M 4 O 3 — -100¥

I almost couldn't even bear to look. Nothing, especially the Saturn, deserves to go out this way! Why Capcom didn't produce a 2D *FF* beat-'em-up is beyond me, but somehow, this blatant waste of disc space made sense to someone (god would I love to have their e-mail address). The graphics are nearly as painful to observe as the gameplay and only the game's cover art (and the fact that its ECM's copy) kept it from an early grave.

G 5 C 5 P 5 M 5 O 4 — 56

Kill me, kill me now. I've never been one to hail the Saturn, but let's face it, the 2D games it hosted blew away the competition. Why then, is this near unplayable travesty (taken from a fantastic old school game) a 3D fighter? I actually got to test it out in Akihabara before anyone else in the office and I was branded a heretic for saying just how poor it really is. Well, vengeance is mine and the masses will finally recognize... oh, sorry, I'm ranting again.

G 3 C 4 P 4 M 4 O 6 — 39



Dimahoo
Arcade
Capcom
Shooter
Reviewed page 80

This and *Punch Mania* were the two games I played the most at ASI. Psikyo is still my favorite shooter company, but Raizing is a very solid second. Vertically-scrolling bliss, good graphics, an original theme, the necessary bullet-dodging, nice intensity, and a nifty "elemental change" play mechanic. I'm just disappointed that I was more excited about this game than the people at Capcom arcade. Play it... if you see it at your local arcade.

G 8 C 8 P 9 M 7 O 8 — 91

What a way to make up for *Giga Wing*. Though I don't generally enjoy screen capturing games, who's complaining when it's a shooter of this caliber... thanks ECM! Fast, furious-paced action, an awesome gothic feel and look and blazing hand drawn CPS2 goodness, where do I sign up? Considering *Gunbird 2*'s meager sales, will this one possibly make its way to the DC? Shooter fans, I think its time to start writing Capcom.

G 9 C 8 P 8 M 7 O 7 — 92

I'm not a shooting fan per se (unless homicidal workplace fantasies count), but ECM has been trying to convert me to what he calls 'The Path of the Skilled.' As much as it pains me to say, he is dead on about this game—it absolutely rocks. I feel the need to double my Red Bull intake to keep up with the action. Sadly, shooter conversions aren't what they could be, but if Capcom decides to port this puppy to the DC, I'll happily spring for it.

G 9 C 9 P 9 M 9 O 8 — 91



Samba de Amigo
Dreamcast
Sega
Music
Reviewed page 66

Get your maracas and prepare to salsa! Now the last time I wrote off a Sonic Team game based on its premise, it was the stellar Chu2... this time I was a little more careful. Only problem is that I had more fun *watching* this game than playing it. While Eggo feels the Latin beats nightly at his apartment with Dangohead (with or without this game, I might add) I'm gonna have to say it's cool but not my kind of cool... olé olé sans Ricky Martin (bet he's also playing nightly at Eggo's).

G 9 C 7 P 8 M 8 O 8 — 84

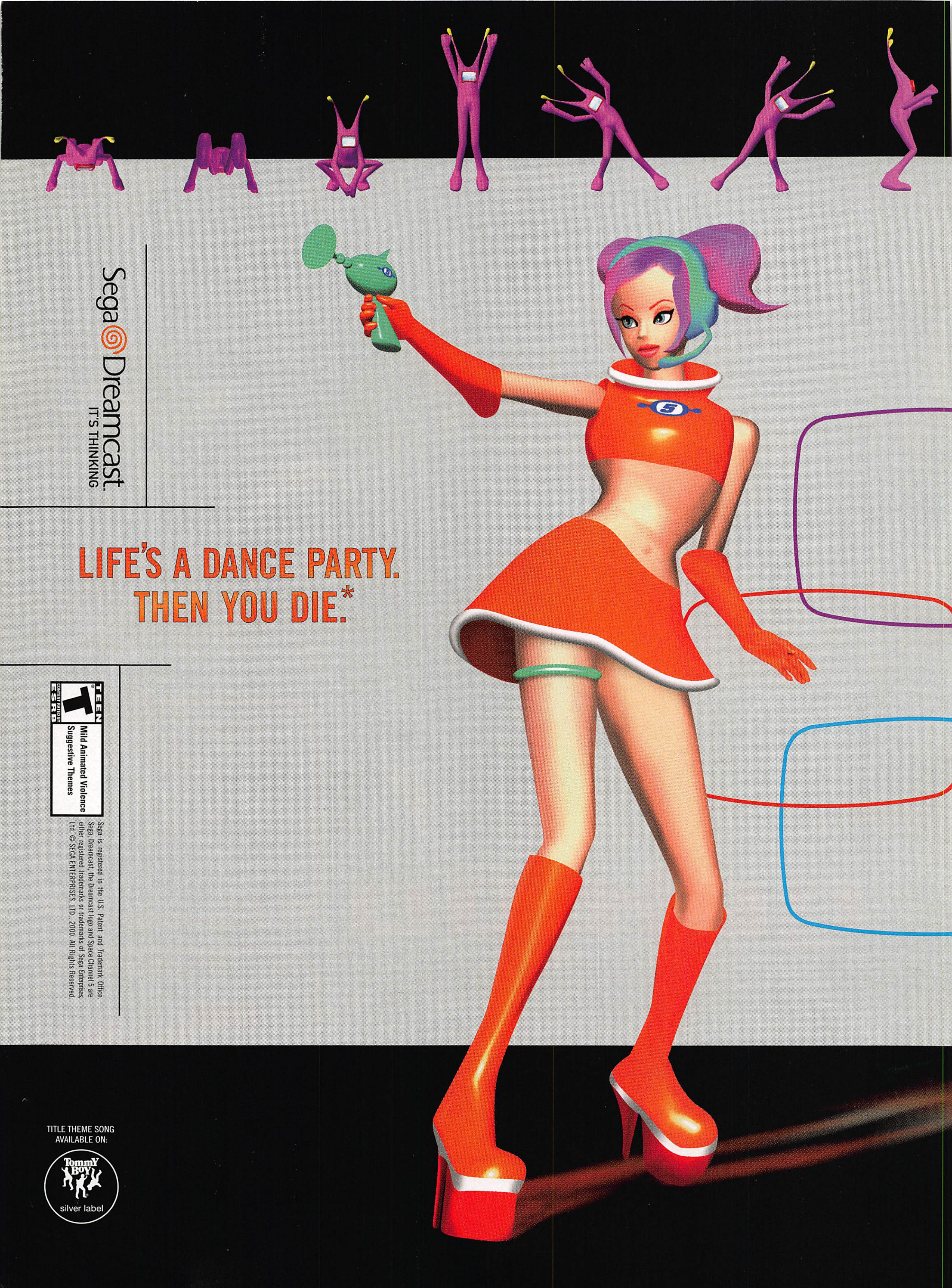
While its easy to imagine that anything coming from Sonic Team will be amazing, I'd be lying if I told you a rhythm game was at the top of my list. Hmm, *SDA* or *NiGHTS 2*... tough choice. The end result here is easily the ONLY music game that truly interests me. Psychedelic colors, crazy characters and "Take On Me"—what a combo. But why do I get the feeling that my maracas will wind up collecting dust next to my DC fishing rod?

G 9 C 8 P 7 M 8 O 8 — 90

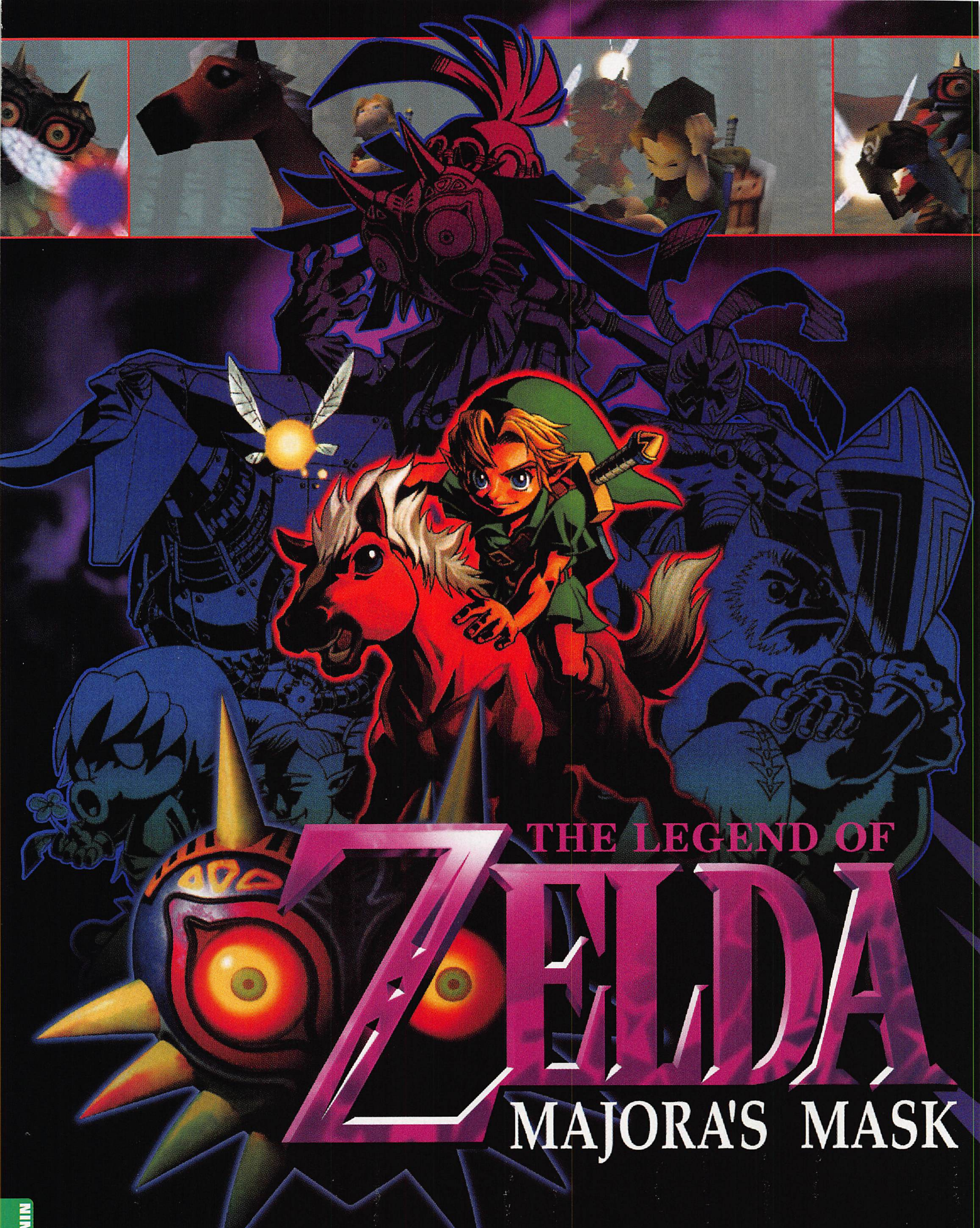
Hey look, a great Sonic Team party game... well, that all depends on your definition of the word party. I'll tell you this much: The game is adequately fun and original, but get ready for some bad news. The price tag, with the maracas of course, will set you back anywhere from 150-200 bucks. Me, I'd rather spend the cash on a domestic DC unit or some liquid courage and see Tao pass out behind ECM's couch in the fetal position (oops, too late!)

G 8 C 9 P 7 M 8 O 9 — 87


THREE'S A CROWD
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• Solid single-player mode takes you through 15 progressive 3-D environments where all hell breaks loose as you discover new routes and playable characters
• Start with 4 different characters, each with their own signature "rage" moves, devastating combos, juggles and more!
• Anything is a weapon, and the interactive environments are loaded with both traditional painmakers like rocket launchers, guns and creative weapons like soda machines, oil canisters and other "surprises"
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AVAILABLE ON:
Tommy Boy
silver label


Space Channel 5





P PREVIEW

ECM: Why're them dang toves so slithy, anyway?	Developer - Nintendo	1 Player
	Publisher - Nintendo	Available Now Japan/Nov. US











A Tale of Two Tales

As a child, my parents made me read. And I don't mean, "Read a few pages before bed," I mean, "Read 'Last of the Mohicans' and 'Moby Dick' this week"—all at the young age of eight years old (which may explain my odd penchant for obscure vocabulary—"wend," "über," et al). However, once in a great while, I got my grubby little mitts on something more 'childlike,' novels by Jules Verne, Edgar Rice Burroughs, H.G. Wells and especially Lewis Carroll, the author of classics like "Jabberwocky" and *Through the Looking Glass* (among many, many others). His poems and stories were filled to the brim with bizarre, vivid (drug-induced?) imagery that a child of any age could appreciate—at least from an off-the-wall, Looney Tunes-esque point of view. Wonderful characters like the Cheshire Cat, Tweedle Dee and Fur-err, Tweedle Dum, the Queen of Hearts, the Rabbit ("I'm late for a very important date!") and, of course, the horrid Jabberwock induced many a sleepless night. Yep, that guy had a line on something, let me tell ya...

What, you may ask, does this have to do with Nintendo's follow-up to the "Greatest Game of All Time?" In point of fact, everything.

Through the Looking Glass

Picture this: Link has just returned from the trials and tribulations of *Ocarina of Time.* Traveling through a misty wood astride Epona, he comes across two fairies frolicking in the gloom of the aged forest, unaware that they harbor less than gracious intentions. Suddenly, Epona is struck squarely in the muzzle, rears up, and unceremoniously dumps Link to the ground. Darkness ensues...

As Link awakens (with massive headache), he finds that a curious fellow is meddling with his prized ocarina. The interloper attempts to regain possession of his once prized magical instrument, quickly leaps aboard Epona, and is off at a mad gallop... but not before Link manages to snag Epona's flank. Link is dragged rough and tumble through the deep, dank woods, and hangs on for dear life till he's jarringly dislodged from Epona's side and can only watch hopelessly as the two fade into a hooded cave in the distance.

Link wastes no time, though, leaps to his feet and runs headlong into the cave caring only about rescuing Epona and the ocarina from this mischievous wretch. Things soon come to a screeching halt, though... just not quickly enough. Link topples headfirst into a deep, dark pit... and down through the rabbit hole we go.

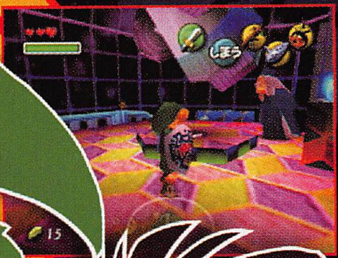
What ensues from that point forward is a trip to a world that sits just slightly askew from the Hyrule we all know and love. Oh, a

















number of the people Link met in his Hyrule days are there, but they don't know him, nor will they remember him—at all. The goal, then, is clear: Get the ocarina and Epona back and put an end to the mischievous Starkid (or Stalkid, depending on which Romanization you prefer), the evil bugger that got Link into this mess in the first place. Oh, and did I mention the angry planetoid that's bearing down on the world this very minute?

Bad Moon Rising

Yes, it seems that this 'pocket reality' is doomed to perish in a scant three days—thanks in large part to a rogue moon that's about to crash into its surface and consume all in a hellish, fiery blaze—picture the nuclear sequence from "T2," and you'll get the idea. Needless to say, this isn't your little brother's *Zelda*...

Link, then, must not only put a stop to Starkid, but he must also save the world from a rather melodramatic end (could it be that both goals are one and the same?). And you thought keeping Hyrule out from under Ganon's steel-shod boot was gonna be rough... I'm thinking that there's no fate worse than death.









Groundhog Day: The Video Game

Now, while *OOT* featured massive amounts of time-hopping and required deft jumps between the past and the future over the course of weeks, *MM* takes place in a scant seventy-two hours—three days (no more, no less) is precisely the amount of time before the rogue planet (and a very angry planetoid it is) introduces itself to the local population. I know, I know, seventy-two hours may not sound like a lot of time, but hold your horses... that's where the ocarina comes in.

Using the power of the ocarina (after retrieving it from Starkid, of course), Link can return at any time during the game to the beginning of the three-day period. This resets everything; people no longer remember meeting him, perishable objects appear back where they started, and quests that were incomplete can be finished, albeit from scratch. There are a few things Link retains as he spirals backwards through time, however. He gets to keep major quest items (masks, heart containers and money, if you know what to do with it), and certain events do not have to be repeated (i.e., hitting the owl statues). This is also the **only** way to save the game, so if you've nearly got a task completed, don't plan on saving part of the way through—it's all or nothing.

***Shen Mue* Chapter III: Hyrule**

If you've had the pleasure of taking Ryo through *Shen Mue*'s Tokyo, then you have a pretty good idea of what to expect while in town in *MM*... People there behave like real people—they go to work, fix meals, run errands, see friends, go out for a drink (of milk, naturally) and generally engage in whatever individuals in a tripped-out version of "Alice in Wonderland" might do.











The Man Behind the... Deku Mask?!?

If there's one thing that personifies *MM,* it's (you guessed it) masks—lots of 'em—and if it's not the deku mask (the one Link's 'compelled' to wear at the outset of the game), it's the goron or zora mask—masks that actually change Link's form and grant him wicked powers. The deku mask allows Link to fly (if he finds a deku shrub), spit magical sap to pop balloons and deal with unruly critters.

Salvador Dali Does *Zelda*

O.K., so you won't find any drooping clocks or odd watercolor landscapes... but what you will see are things you've never seen in Hyrule (or a slightly off-kilter version thereof) before. Instead of the wide open, nearly endless 'levels' of *OOT,* Link's confined to much less epic locales. Not to say that this is bad, mind you. Just think of it as "Dances With Wolves" versus, say, "Tombstone"... They're both great films, but one clearly has a more 'epic' feel to it.



Meanwhile, *MM*'s graphics are radically different than those of *OOT.* Its colors are brighter, dare I say garish at times (keeping in line with the "Alice in Wonderland" theme). Its architecture is also more, um, loose than *OOT*'s. The crazy spiraling, Dada-esque observatory is the perfect example of a world turned upside down.

The graphics, overall, are marginally improved over *Zelda*'s first outing on the N64. The game doesn't run in high resolution (the RAM pak's reserved for loading more of the environments at once), but it's clear that the characters are more expressive and boast slightly higher poly counts.

Aurally, the game reuses most of the tunes found in *OOT.* This isn't a bad thing, either, but it would've been nice if Nintendo had at least composed some completely original **and** memorable tunes to accompany the old ones... When they originally called this game *Zelda Gaiden,* they weren't kidding.

Coming to an N64 Near You...

This one isn't due till November in the U.S., and for once, I strongly recommend you wait it out... Why? Because this game features some heavy-duty gaijin protection. What's that? Well, for the newbies, it's when a Japanese developer seems to purposely include elements for those that have a less-than-acute grasp of the native tongue. In other words, if you don't have at least a minimal grasp of the Japanese language, it's gonna be a long, slow, arduous process...

After all is said and done, though, I'm sure the burning question on your lips is, "Can the game possibly be good, and dare I say, better than *OOT?*" And to that, I can give you a solid "maybe." At this point in the game (about twelve hours in), it doesn't feature the epic scope of the original game (what with a mere four dungeons), but I have found myself becoming truly lost under its spell. Needless to say, if you were one of the millions that thought this was the greatest game ever, I find it highly unlikely that you'll be disappointed... even without Miyamoto at the helm. Stay tuned for the full review later this year. **ECM**










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PlayStation



The Rebirth of 'Cool'

Sit back for a second and try to define the word 'cool.' It's tough, isn't it? The truth is that you can't know that something is really cool—that it has something you just don't come across often—until you experience it for yourself. Unfortunately, I've been assigned to do that very thing, to communicate to you, the inexperienced, the 'coolness' that is Sega's upcoming DC game *Jet Set Radio*...

If you've ever seen Capcom's *Power Stone* running on a VGA monitor, then you know how solid Dreamcast games can (and, perhaps, should) look. Well, *JSR* definitely reaches that high pinnacle, and quite possibly exceeds it outright. How? Well, quite simply, its polygonal world of 'Tokyoto' is as large as *Crazy Taxi*'s and as detailed as *Metropolis Street Racer*'s. It's rendered with a whole new technique in which both the characters and the expansive environments (which really do sport that distinctive look of a Japanese city) come across in a style that's probably closer to Disney-quality hand-drawn animation than any other game—ever. Combine this with a healthy frame-rate, and the notion of playing a cartoon is about to become a reality...









EXCLUSIVE KODOMO: Yup, Picasso would've been a skate rat.	Developer - Sega Publisher - Sega	1-? Players Available June Japan





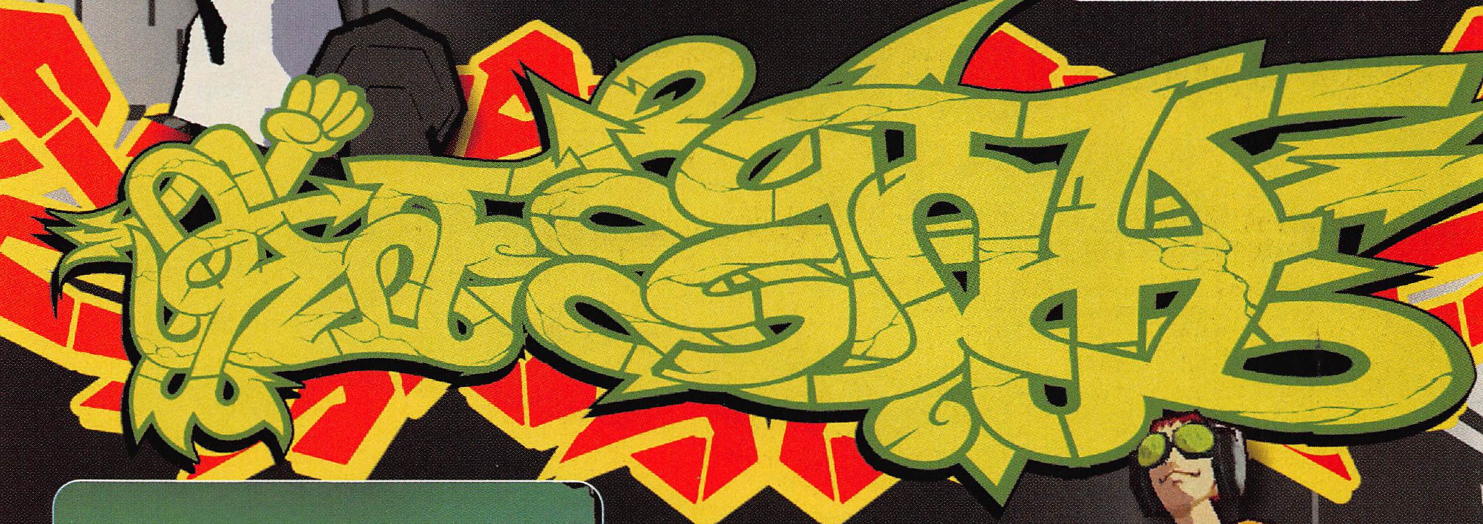
Crime Doesn't Pay... But It Sure Plays Well

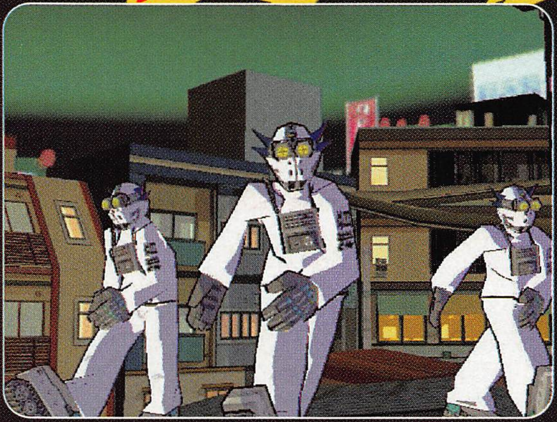
The object of the game is simple, but don't let that fool you into thinking that it's a mindless one. Sure, all players do is skate around and tag areas that are marked with bright green arrows, but there's much more to it than simple screen shots can convey. First of all, you'll need paint, and the random spray cans players must find are scattered throughout each city. Oh, and each one can only be used to tag one surface. Some will be easy to reach, while others will require rail slides across narrow pipes, between buildings, or even over them, on adjacent rooftops. Of course, there are many ways to do this—skaters can jump on cars to get more air, smash through certain walls and even perform full body flips.

With can in hand and a kicking funk soundtrack fueling the mayhem, the job quickly becomes more strategic than one might think... Sure, you can see that arrow high atop an office building, but can you get there without tumbling down three stories? And what about the various cars, buses and people peppering the digital landscape? As they go about their daily routines, they'll inevitably get in the way and just become general nuisances (and, in the case of vehicles, run you over).



And, of course, much to my amusement, Tokyoto isn't without the presence of the long arm of the law... After a certain amount of time has elapsed, multiple flatfoots will appear and chase you faster than an Oregon logger chased Fury in his boarding school days (cue "Deliverance" theme song). Needless to say, evading multiple cops is tough (two of them grabbed my skater by the leg and clung on tightly as I attempted to hobble away). Be sure not to stay too long in one place if committing illegal activities.

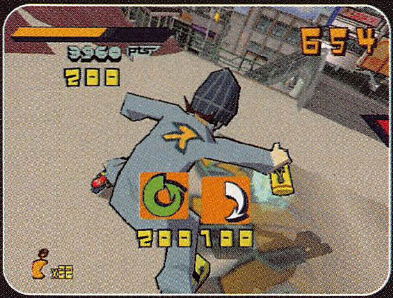






Just How Set Is Jet Set Radio?

A gamer's greatest fear of a title that looks like a comic book is that its gameplay will be comic as well. Do you really want to play a game that looks like a cartoon but is reactive instead of interactive? Don't get me wrong—innovative-looking games such as *Parappa the Rapper* and *Space Channel 5* are fun for a short time. But when you figure out that you really aren't interacting with anything, but are just reacting to directional cues, something is lost. Thankfully, my all-too-brief session with *JSR* inspired nothing but admiration for it. You can go anywhere in the town using the digital pad for control, then switch to the analog stick to take multiple passes at a given surface.



As a matter of principle (not to mention respect for the law—ha ha), I don't typically respect the art of 'taggers' (in my book, they rank just below lawyers and Pokémon fans <cringe>). *JSR*, however, looks set to present this questionable pastime in a stylish manner that no game has before. It was, without a doubt, the game of the spring TGS, and will definitely make the transition to the U.S. later this year. **K**


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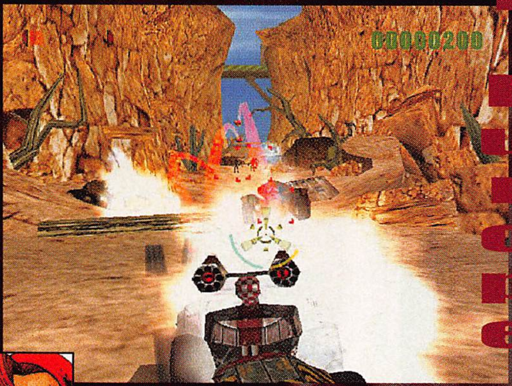

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"All-out blasting is the name of the game..."









From Argonaut and Sega of Europe

Sega of Europe isn't, shall we say, well known for sticking to release dates... Its network gaming system has been repeatedly postponed, and of the six proposed European Dreamcast launch (or, to be generous, near-launch) titles, only No Cliché's *Toy Commander* was finished in time. Meanwhile, Bizarre's *Metropolis* still hasn't seen the light of day, Appaloosa's finishing up *Ecco*, Red Lemon's *Take The Bullet* has apparently been canned and Argonaut has only now released its much-delayed tank shoot-'em-up *Red Dog*.

In *Red Dog*, hostile alien forces (under the collective name of 'Haak') descend on a series of human settlements in outer space, and the Red Dog Tactical Response Team sets out to assess the situation and determine an appropriate defensive strategy. When the team loses contact with its recon units, however, it acts quickly and rolls out the Red Dog assault vehicle—which you then take control of and cruise around in, blowing all aliens to smithereens.

For a video game, it's a sound premise—take a heavily armed yet nimble tank, negotiate detailed landscapes and search for weapon upgrades to eradicate your enemies and end-of-level bosses. All-out blasting is the name of the game, but Argonaut does attempt to inject the gameplay with some much-needed variety... In the third level, players must clear a route for a bomb unit while providing cover. The squad tends to take the shortest route toward its target, but the shortest route is often the most dangerous route; it doesn't take long, then, before chaos ensues and a crowd of frantic, itchy trigger men start shooting up a storm and alien tanks, foot soldiers and aerial fighters alike meet their doom...



Sadly, however, these kinds of exciting episodes are few and far between. Most levels show a complete lack of excitement and atmosphere. Even the chaotic armed escort missions fail to boost adrenaline levels. This could be due in part to the weak and very clichéd enemy design, though I also find it strange that a company like Argonaut, which has always been at the forefront of 3D engine design, couldn't come up with a better camera system. It's not uncommon in the game to lose sight of your tank behind a column or bulkhead, only to see your energy levels rapidly shrink... It's very frustrating, even for ninja gamers.

Yes, the gameplay can be challenging, but once the game's primary missions are complete, a series of challenge missions (i.e., hit a certain amount of targets, collect pick-ups, race through an obstacle course, etc., all under a tight time limit) will open up. Here, players can earn extra equipment (namely, upgrades to basic shields and weapons) to make the main missions a bit easier.

There are also a number of special weapons littered about the levels. One, when picked up, activates a hovering cannon that appears beside the Red Dog. With the special weapon button, gamers can then unleash extra damage until the cannon runs out of ammo. Shields are also available; hold down the X button, and they'll kick in and deflect enemy fire until their energy runs down. Be careful, though, because then, it's time to put the pedal back to the metal and wait for them to recharge. One feature that's particularly lacking in the game is a proper strafing function. Hold both triggers, and you should be able to fly right in and take an enemy out... The method simply doesn't work as it should, though—try to take out a few enemy installations while strafing, and nine times out of ten, you'll end up going in the completely wrong direction while the camera decides it has more interesting things to display: "Hmmm, that's a pretty texture, think I'll have a gander... la, la, la..."

E EXCLUSIVE			
THE 6TH MAN: RED DOG LEFT ON 3, READY, BREAK!	DEVELOPER - ARGONAUT PUBLISHER - SEGA EUROPE	1-4 PLAYERS AVAILABLE NOW EUROPE	VIEWPOINT SCORE: 75

RED DOG



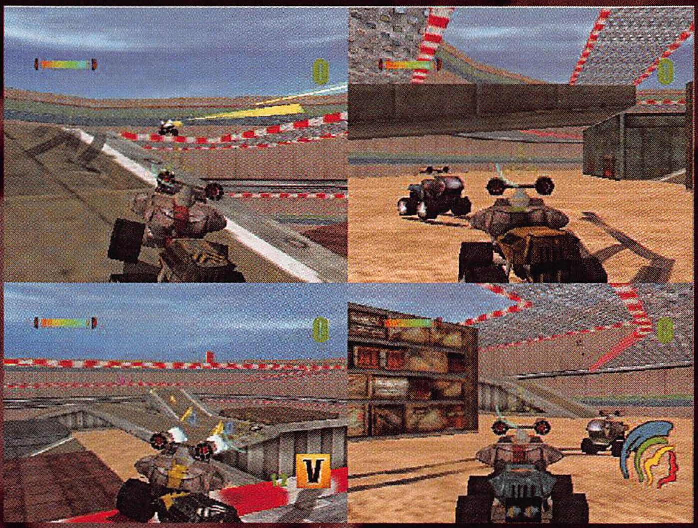
The environments are expansive, though, and range from impressive cityscapes (including Red Dog Research City) to the dusty rocks of the Grand Canyon. The textures and objects aren't amazing, but the game maintains a silky-smooth frame-rate and some very nice lighting effects. The rendering depth is excellent, as well—targets far on the horizon appear very clearly. Sadly, you can't do much damage to the environments or stray very far from the pre-determined paths...

Red Dog was designed with four-player action in mind, and Argonaut comes up big with many multi-player variations; the game features the usual fare, including deathmatch, "Knock Out" and "Bomb Tag" modes, but also features two other variations. In "King of the Hill," players must (as you've probably guessed) make it up a hill, and then defend that hill from all other players until the timer runs out. In "Stealth Assassins" mode, on the other hand, one player is equipped with stealth abilities, and must dispense of the other players quickly and quietly. Only kills made under full cloak will count. If that player stays still, the other players won't be able to see him. If he moves, however, his tank slowly becomes visible. Unfortunately, the element of surprise in this mode isn't very effective—one only has to look at the stealth player's screen to figure out where he is.

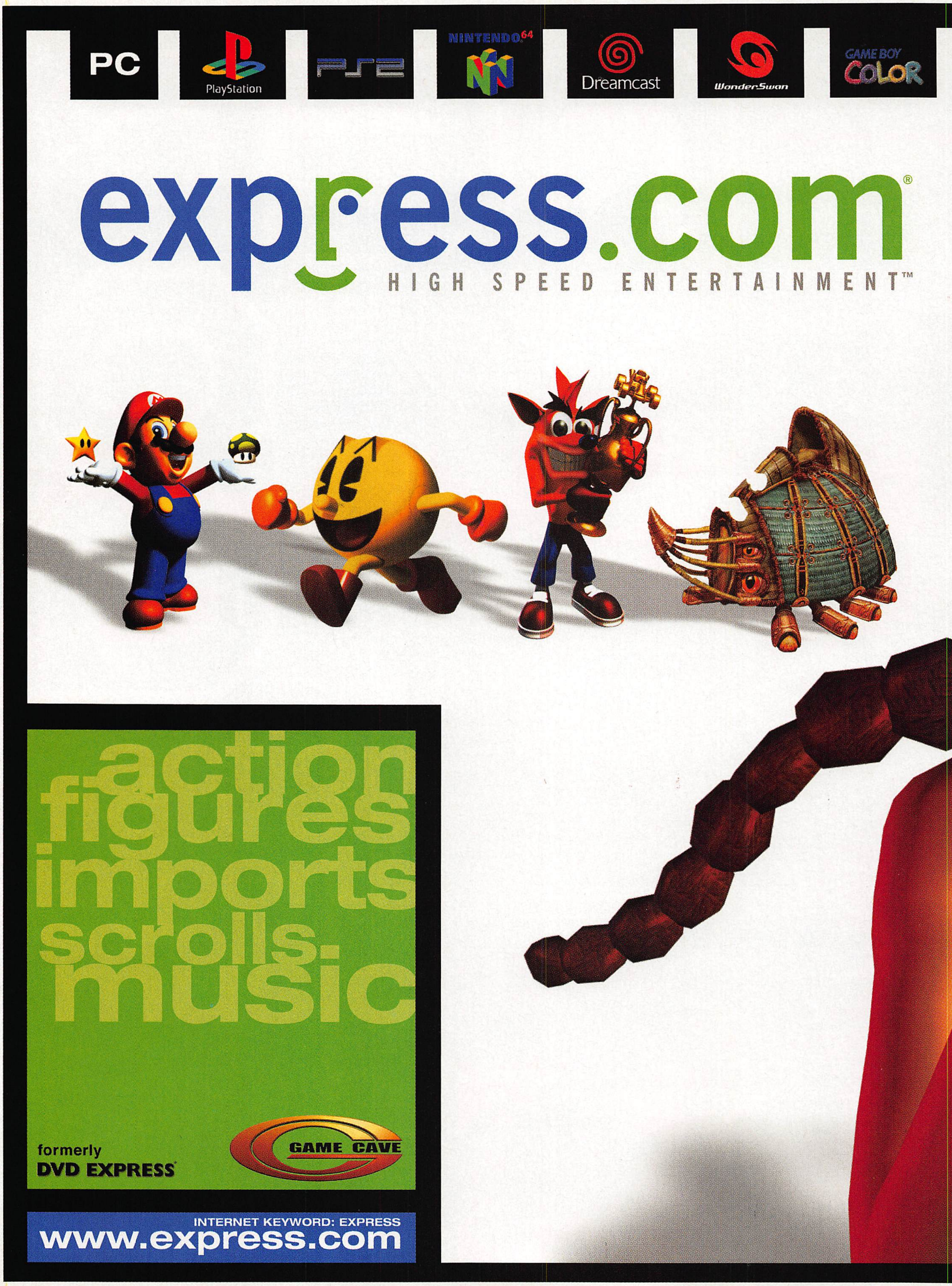
Red Dog certainly has its niggling faults, but it's not a bad game; far from it, in fact. The action's often very tough—the latter levels are just plain frustrating—but the first few will keep players coming back just to 'try one more time.' The gameplay's slightly unbalanced, as well. The levels themselves aren't that difficult, but the bosses will knock you flat on the ground, and replaying the entire level time and time again just isn't much fun.

It's not the longest game, either, though. There are but six standard missions and seven challenge missions. The multi-player mode guarantees a bit more long-term fun, but somehow (call me a sicko), blowing up tanks instead of flesh-and-blood characters just isn't as much fun. *Turok: Rage Wars* suffered from the same problem: All characters sort of look the same, and as such, it's hard to really get into the action. I mean, if everyone looks the same, how are you supposed to care about who you blast?

The 6th Man would just like to stress that this review is based on the European final and as such could change if and when the game makes it out on US shores... but he's not holding his breath.






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Same* Evolution *Time, Same* Evolution *Channel

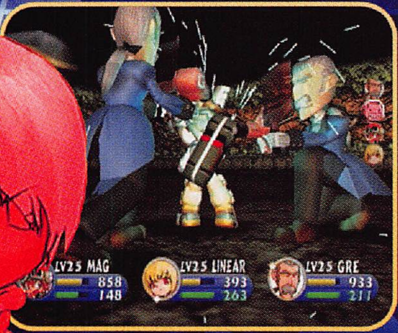
When Sting first introduced *Mysterious Dungeon* (a.k.a. *Evolution*) on Dreamcast, I wasn't sure what to think. After all, with my deep and undying love of all dungeon-crawlers (see *Chocobo's Mysterious Dungeon* and *Toruneko's Great Adventure*), I was looking forward to it with the anticipation normally reserved for root canals, bypass surgery and another fine morning waking up to Reubus' cats and their finicky digestive tracts—"Oops, silly me, forgot to put my shoes on *before* stepping out of bed <grah>..." I was pleasantly surprised by *Evolution*, though. It featured plenty of monotonous yet strangely compulsive gameplay. Monotonous yet compulsive? Yes, it was, and I know that doesn't make much sense. Perhaps it was the game's endearing story line that elevated it from 'mindless dungeon romp' to something worth playing through.

Evolution Or Revolution?

So now, *Evolution 2* is here, and not surprisingly, it seems in essence to be a mission pack—you know, those bolt-on enhancements that very few console games have ever seen but flank the release of nearly every PC game (ah, the freedom of no royalties... and no quality). They often include new levels, new weapons and, on occasion, a new quest. However, they generally contain the barest minimum in overt improvements. Sure, there's a new character here or a new texture there, but these 'games' aren't designed to sell on their own merits, they're designed simply to extend the life of a title symbiotically (and, more often than not, make some coin for the back-room developer). So before we delve into the nuts and bolts of *Evo2*, let me just get this out of the way: This is more like *Evolution: Season 2* than an all-new game.

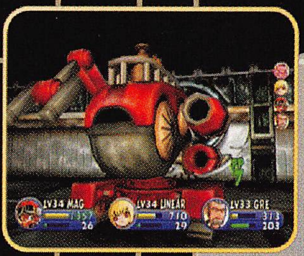













When Last We Checked On Our Heroes...

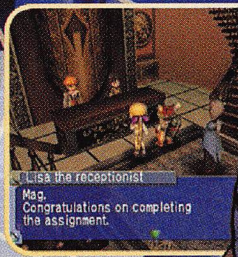
So what's going on in the all-too-exciting lives of super-treasure hunter-cum-danger-seeker Mag Launcher, his stalwart 'sister' Linear and their faithful manservant, Gre, since their last titanic outing? Well, it seems that Mag's still in debt and, shockingly enough, the party's embarking on another set of quests—this time for the 'I'm not sure, but I think he's holding something back' Dr. Whitehead (why on earth he's named after a zit is beyond me... you'd think that might alienate this game's target audience, no?). The bounty hunter chick is back, as well, not to mention the irrepressible Chain (read: "annoying"). Finally, there's the addition of Yurka, the fruitcake—a character that otaku (and otaku only) will be able to appreciate (think long, dangling pink sleeves <shudder>)...

Vinegar Or Wine?

...which is fine. After all, every *Sonic* game was based on the same engine, with bolt-on enhancements and a few nips and tucks—and you certainly won't hear me complaining about a sequel to a game like that, that I quite enjoyed (games that I *didn't* like the first time, on the other hand...). *Evo2* obviously features better CG, textures, models, music, etc., etc. The story line's all-new, as well, but the game will still send you reeling from a solid dose of déjà vu.





For those that missed the first *Evolution* (tsk, tsk), the gameplay goes something like this: Enter a number of multi-tiered dungeons, go spelunking for treasure, put down some monsters and avoid potential traps. The thing is, the dungeons are mostly cakewalks—you can traipse through them as if you were frolicking through the autumn mist in a land called... well, you know. The bosses, however, are another matter altogether: If you're from the 'get through an RPG as fast as possible' school of play (like me), they'll obliterate you in short order—like the time I got to the last boss in *Final Fantasy II*, only to find out later that I was there twelve levels too early... oops.

Anyway, the bosses in *Evolution* have traditionally been steroid-stoked monsters capable of rendering our intrepid trio completely lifeless within five minutes **unless** they're suitably leveled up. No, there'll be none of that tightrope walking where you're constantly perched between heaven and hell, and that last health potion keeps you *juuust* one hit point ahead of the boss... so you can barely squeak in the last hit to save the day (if you've played even two or three RPGs, you **know** what I'm talking about)... Just make sure you've worked out sufficiently before you get to the bosses, or they'll hand you your head in short order.

Closed Captioning Brought To You By Ubi Soft

Oh, and one last note: The game's completely in Japanese with English subtitles. Personally, I can appreciate such a move in a game like *Shen Mue* (and, to a lesser extent, *Panzer Dragoon Saga*—but only when speaking in that pseudo-Germanic language), but when video game voice acting approaches even a marginally professional level, I feel that the industry's taking a big step backward. I guess that explains the rapidity with which this game was localized, however—any moment now, the hyper-otaku are liable to stage a pride march, with Shidoshi in front, as the Grand Marshall, decked out in magenta hair, leading the social-life-less on a march for... whoa, sorry 'bout that.

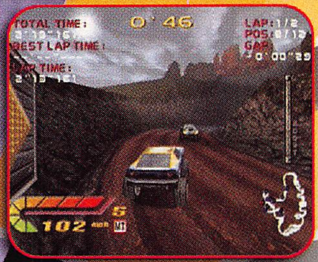
Anyway, buy it, play it, like it a lot (I'll stop short of 'love,' lest I get branded a 'sissy')... *Evolution 2* should be available as you're reading this, so if you're desperate for a DC RPG fix, it should tide you over, at least until *Eternal Arcadia, Phantasy Star Online* and (silence please) *Grandia II* arrive. Who's the new king of the RPG...? **ECM**

Viewpoint Score :87	Developer - Sting/ESP	1 Player	ECM: Highly	R Review
	Publisher - Ubi Soft	Available Now	evolved.	

Dreamcast

4 WHEEL THUNDER™





O.K., I'll be the first to admit that after playing *Ridge Racer V,* complete with its 60 fps of lighting-fast insanity, I had a harder time going back to (60, 40, 30 fps...) *Sega Rally 2* on the Dreamcast. Generally—and this really applies to most any game I'm playing, save *Daikatana*—I can easily overlook a game's inconsistent frame-rate and the always lovely pop-up, but after a while, jealousy does inevitably set in. Can you blame me? Jeez, could you imagine a 60-fps version of *Sega GT* and (I hate to bring up it up again, but...) a rock-solid, non-WinCE version of *Rally 2*? Mmm, so good. Sure, gameplay, above all else, is key, but offer me a title with both speed and tight control, and I'm hooked like Shidoshi at a cos-play reunion. Hmm, it seems like I'm forgetting something... Ah, play mechanics and, what do you know—hello, *Four Wheel Thunder!*

"Well, at least it's super-fast..."—exact quote of unnamed GameFan editor (think large skull). Look, Kalisto's *4WT* came out of nowhere, and I, like the rest of the staff, was in complete awe of its unbelievable speed and crisp graphics. And compared to the questionable demo of the game we'd received only a few months earlier, it does indeed seem that Kalisto's pulled off a *Strider 2*-sized turnaround (*S2* at last year's E3 had severe issues). Disbelievers of the DC's processing power will finally be silenced, but sadly, in *4WT*'s case, the achievement comes with a hefty price tag...



We all know what kind of game *4WT* is (if ya don't, you need to revisit Screen Shot Identifying 101); think along the lines of *TNT Hardcore Heat* (DC) and *Off Road Thunder* on the N64. Those games weren't exactly... how should I put this... *good.* Well, honestly, despite its speed and visual presentation, *4WT* isn't too hot, either. The tracks are chock-full o' excellent detail, but are so long (over three minutes per lap) and uninspiring that they become extremely monotonous. I know it's nearly unfathomable, especially with its killer car models, terrain textures, lack of draw-in, etc., but after extended play, this game just gets boring. Finding the motivation to unlock new tracks and cars is like finding the drive to sit on a Stairmaster for thirty minutes... it's just not at the top of my 'To Do' list.



The play mechanics are equally tedious and frustrating. Regardless of where a player finishes, he/she starts each race in (very painful) twelfth place. Speak of the devil—if you start each race in twelfth, you'd think that there would be twelve competitors on-screen at any given time... right? Well, not in this game. It seems Kalisto was so intent on delivering cutting-edge speed and visuals that it had to forego the amount of cars on-screen—so, throughout the race, gamers see only four vehicles at a time. That's if they're lucky, however. Most of the race will be a solo drive. The other cars zoom ahead from the start, and players find themselves in a long, frustrating game of catch-up. Oh, did you actually think that all the cars would exit the starting gate simultaneously? Foolish sausage. Once the race begins, you'll find you're already precious seconds behind the pack. And like Midway's own *Hydro Thunder,* the only way one can even pretend to catch up is to collect as many turbo boosts as possible. This is integral to achieving a qualifying win. In all honesty, I find that I constantly rely on turbos when I play, whether I'm trying to catch up or actually striving to preserve a last-second win, and regardless of how many upgrades my vehicle has received. Turbos play so heavily into this game that it should be called *4 Wheel Boost.* It's every bit as annoying as starting out dead last.



With shortcuts galore, multiple vehicle types, car upgrades, two different arcade modes and a championship race, it sure seemed like Kalisto was offering the total package in *FWT*... Had it only spent more time refining the play mechanics, I might have had to retire *Rally 2* from its dirt-encrusted throne.





Fury would like to take 4WT's engine and inject Rally 2's play mechanics... What do you think Sega... Rally 2 Remix?!?

REVIEW	FURY: A GAME OF CHANCE, OR A GAME OF BOOST?	DEVELOPER - KALISTO PUBLISHER - MIDWAY	1-2 PLAYERS AVAILABLE NOW	VIEWPOINT SCORE: 70





GAUNTLET LEGENDS









I've always been up front about my feelings towards RPGs. If it involves tons of reading and playing Sherlock Holmes to figure out the menu systems, the game's lost its appeal to me. Yes, Eggo, I might be committing the ultimate sacrilege in your eyes, but believe it or not there are others out there with similar tastes (coal miners for instance—I hear they're real big on *Mr. Driller*). But give me a medieval style game that thrives in the action department and allows for leveling up and I'll come a-running, broadsword in hand. That, my friends, is what Midway's *Gauntlet* series has always provided—an action game flowing with role-playing elements and lacking any degree of deep thought... man, was I in heaven or what!

But alas, after witnessing the nightmare, disguised as the N64 and PS versions of *Gauntlet Legends*, (and especially in light of a new crop of Action/RPG's like *Phantasy Star Online)* I was nearly ready to sign *Gauntlet* off for the long haul. Could the mighty swirling white console save the Valkyrie, Warrior, Archer and Wizard from a framey, poor-textured death? Midway needs new arcade hardware badly!



How disappointing is it that there are only two measly beat-'em-ups on the DC. Add *GL* to the mix, and at least it broadens the horizon a bit. But at what cost does just having another action game on store shelves come? I hate to say it, but in *GL*'s case all willing participants will pay dearly in the visual category. See, regardless of how close the DC rev comes to mimicking the arcade piece (and it does come damn close... just can't decide if that's a good or bad thing), the truth of the matter is, it was never a good looking game to begin with. If you're expecting to be dazzled by 128-bit graphic power, think again.

Since it first reappeared back in arcades around '96, the one aspect *GL* certainly thrived on was its non-stop action and, of course, its decent carnage level never hurt. But realistically, if you've played one *Gauntlet* game you've basically played them all... find health, escape from Death, find more health and continue on. Sure, it wasn't exactly rocket science, but as a four-player game it definitely won major points. Midway now has the fortunate opportunity to beat Capcom's *Power Stone 2* out of the gate and take honors as the first developer to release a four player beat-'em-up on the DC... golf clap, anyone?

While *GL* includes several characteristics from Midway's newest *Gauntlet* arcade addition, *GL Dark Legacy* (including a handful of new playable fighters like the dwarf, jester etc and certain levels from *DL*), I feel I'd be doing gamers a disservice if I recommended this title over stalwart beat-'em-ups like *Zombie Revenge* or even *Dynamite Cop*. However, if you're adamant about reliving your *Gauntlet* memories of old, or are intent on giving your friends something to do instead of watching you pound buttons on a single DC pad, Midway definitely has your potion, err ticket.

Fury has a hard time with ANY game involving reading; he has difficulty keeping track of a pair of glasses for more than a week... or his keys, or his PS2 power cord, or that pen he was using, or a memory card, or







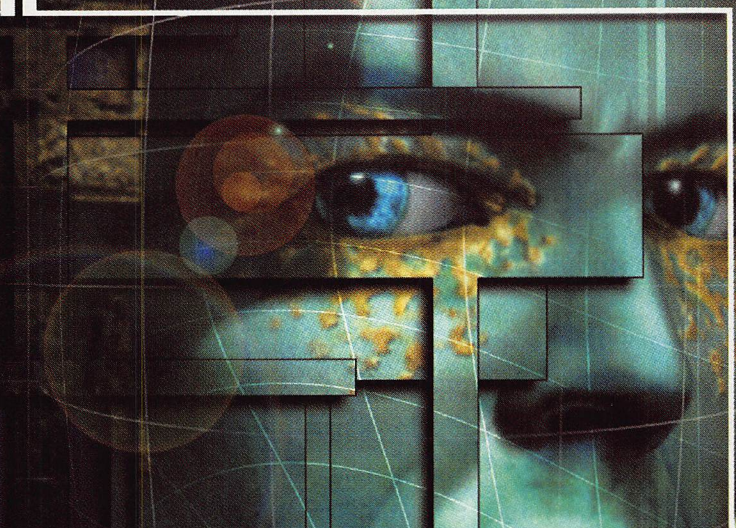
Viewpoint Score	Developer - Midway	1-4 Players	Fury: The joys of 3DFX-arcade hardware?
:70	Publisher - Midway	Available Now	



R REVIEW

Dreamcast

Omikron
the nomad soul



Developer Quantic Dream has a dream: to create an interactive game world loaded with atmosphere reminiscent of the movie "Blade Runner." It may have succeeded, too. From its opening scene, *Omikron* feels like a sci-fi movie... Hover-cars cruise the aerial streets and ED-209-like police robots patrol the city. *Omikron* also features a decreasingly unique possession theme similar to the movie "Fallen." That is, whenever your character dies, he takes control of the next person to come into contact. With every jump into a new body, it takes a while to acclimate to that person's routine and assume his/her persona—however, you still must attend to the mission at hand.

Eventually, you'll assume control of the main character, Boz, who looks and sounds remarkably like David Bowie, because... well, it **is** David Bowie. Yup, ol' Ziggy Stardust himself has signed on for this project, recorded eight new songs exclusively for the game's soundtrack and made his famous visage available for the game's main character model. There's even a first-ever "virtual album" in *Omikron* that your character can buy and listen to at home... in the game.



But wait, there's more! *Omikron* features multiple mini-game sequences to test your all-around gaming skills, varying from a standard fighting game to a first-person shooter. Plus, extensive motion capturing was used for the fight sequences, using real-life martial artists!

As it stands, *Omikron* is an ambitious game with a very life-like world. You can wander the city, admire the view or just plain people-watch, none of which will advance the story, but it's there to do. Strangers will walk by, but will be unconcerned about who you are. "What? You say you're the main character in this game? Get lost, I don't have any money..." Creating such an engrossing world seems like a daunting task, but Quantic Dream deserves kudos for the attempt alone.



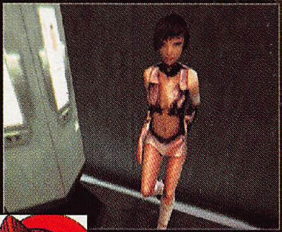
All is not well in *Omikron*, however... The game suffers from multiple problems. Its engine chugs and pauses to load when it should be streaming, its occasional cinematic camera angles are problematic and its programmers picked the most unintelligible text font I've ever seen. If you don't have an S-video setup, you could sit there for hours trying to decipher the hieroglyphic writing on the screen.

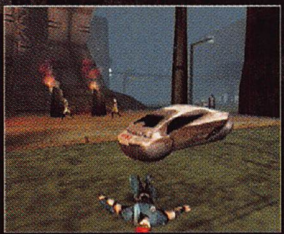


What it all comes down to is this: *Omikron* is a decent action adventure game on DC. While it certainly doesn't come close to games like *Shadow Man* and even Eidos' own *Soul Reaver*, it's certainly an ambitious title. Hopefully Quantic Dreams will come back next time with a game that is as playable as the game is ambitious.

The 6th Man likes to imagine himself with a pink glittery mullet and bell-bottomed silver pants on-stage with the "Roaches of Pluto."



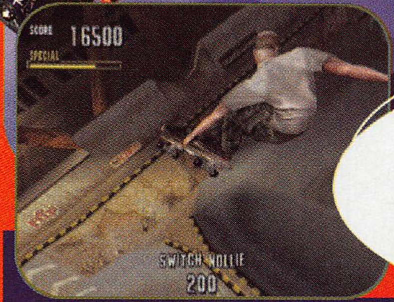




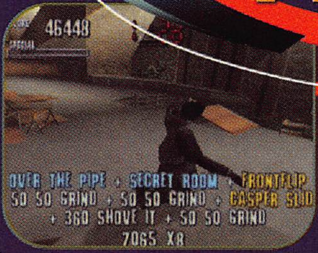


R REVIEW — THE 6TH MAN: FROM "LABYRINTH" TO "TWIN PEAKS"... TO *OMIKRON*	DEV. - QUANTIC DREAMS PUBLISHER - EIDOS	1 PLAYER AVAILABLE NOW	VIEWPOINT SCORE: 74



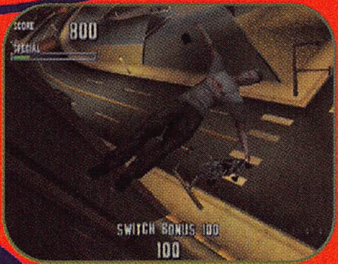


TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER



Unless you've been under a rock for the past six months, you must have played *Tony Hawk Pro Skater* on the PS or N64—it's the best skateboarding game on the market by leaps and bounds, and we had lofty expectations for the Dream Machine port. Even though Neversoft, the geniuses behind the PS best-seller, weren't handling it, the Dreamcast version of *Tony Hawk* sounded amazing. Yes, Crave promised us the world: higher character poly counts, improved textures, reduced fog and a DC-exclusive four-player mode. With a massive overhaul like that, we were totally pumped for the DC version and fully expected to recommend its purchase, even to those that own a prior version of *Tony Hawk*. But woe to those who promise the world and only deliver... witness *Tony Hawk* DC.





What we've got here is a failure to live up to the hype. For starters, the promised four-player mode that we touted months ago in Coming Soon vanished behind the magic curtain, and the character poly counts and fog levels remain exactly the same as in the PS version. So what did Crave do? Well, overall, the game looks better—it runs in high resolution with a faster frame-rate and slightly better textures. Of all the incarnations of *Tony Hawk*, this is still the one to own if you don't already have the game. But I can't help feeling a little disappointed. This game should've done more with the Dreamcast hardware, should've pushed the little white box until it started smoking and the orange light threatened to stop. That's what Neversoft did with the amazing PS version... Alas, the DC port's more like an underachiever that never lives up to its full potential. We could also compare it to the DC port of *Soul Reaver*... Now *there* was a game that promised massive improvements: volumetric fog, higher character poly counts and improved water and lighting effects. Instead, we got the PlayStation version on Bleem!—with high resolutions and a higher frame-rate. And that's nice and pretty, but it's not worth the price of a 'new' game...



Fortunately, *Tony Hawk* DC's gameplay remains solidly intact. The frame-rate in the two-player mode is as smooth as Waka's freshly shaven head (i.e., smooth as a baby's butt), and gives no hint of lost frames or slow-down. Find two players who know what they're doing on the pads, and you'll be in for a 900°-spinning, window-crashing, high-flying, spine-shifting contest full o' bails and insane grind combos. This game's still insanely fun to play—Crave just should've called it a straight port.



Eggo prays he never hears about 1000+ poly-count models in a PS-to-DC port of Spider-Man.

VIEWPOINT SCORE	:80	DEVELOPER - TREYARCH	1-2 PLAYERS	EGGO: SKATE...
		PUBLISHER - CRAVE	AVAILABLE NOW	OR TYPE... OR DIE!

R REVIEW

Dreamcast

Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future



Few games have excited Team GameFan as much as the upcoming *Ecco: Defender of the Future*... In the brackish waters of game development, it's become increasingly difficult to find gaming experiences that transport us back to the days when every title we popped into a console opened new doors in the imagination. In a market glutted with bloated sequels and played-out genres, it's clear that originality and the dreamer have taken a back seat to the banal and the bean counter. So the enthusiastic gamer laments...

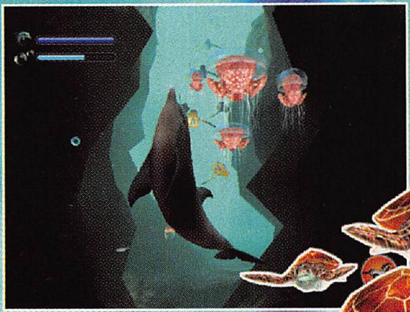
The original *Ecco* was bold and innovative at a time when innovation and risk taking were commonplace... Even so, it still stood out from the crowd. This *Ecco,* however, is of relatively seismic proportions in today's gaming landscape. It's the York Peppermint Patty of the 128-bit era. O.K., maybe that isn't exactly the comparison I was going for, but you get the idea.

If you've read our March issue, you should have a general idea of some aspects and several areas of the game. It's a 3D action adventure with some of the most stunning graphics to date and the type of ambient sound that might be found on one of those relaxation tapes Reubus uses to try and kick his smoking habit... unsuccessfully. Each level has been meticulously drawn and animated, as well, giving the game a very organic look. Finally, *Ecco* will include more than thirty levels for players to swim through, from sandy coves and deep ravines to the lost city of Atlantis, and each level, while maintaining basic, common elements, is uniquely designed.

The many denizens of the deep that Ecco meets are quite beautiful to look at and feature species-specific AI that seeks to emulate its real-life counterparts. There are nervous schools of fish, slow, meandering turtles, aggressive sharks and frisky dolphins. There are whales, manta rays and jellyfish, as well, and each exists alongside one another and interacts with the surrounding area. It's quite an experience swimming among them...



After playing the game for a while, though, one thing really began to annoy me: the camera angles. Now, the game's still far from complete (many of the levels are missing puzzle elements and have no exits), but I'm leery... The underwater scenes are executed quite well, but the transitions from under the water to above the surface are clumsy. Most of the time, the camera doesn't know how to deal with Ecco's jumping, twisting and frolicking, particularly when he breaks the surface. My fondest memories of *Ecco* have come in its aerial acrobatics, and this newest title would be much more fun if gamers could put together their own flying dolphin shows.



Other than that, though, *Ecco: Defender of the Future* remains a marvel of game development. The title's due in just a couple of months, and is shaping up to be one of the most wonderful play experiences of the year (and, perhaps, of the 128-bit era). J





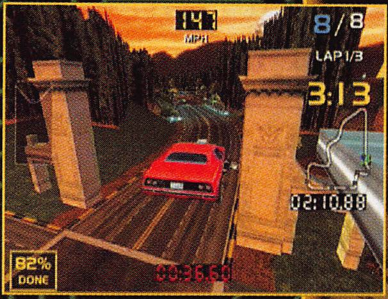




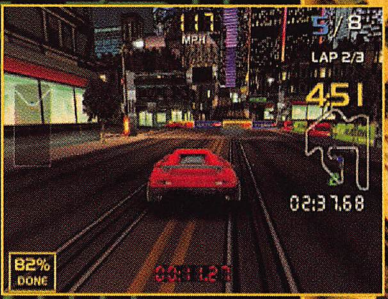


PREVIEW	THE JUDGE: IS THAT A BOTTLE ON YOUR NOSE OR ARE YOU JUST HAPPY TO SEE ME?	DEVELOPER - APPALOOSA PUBLISHER - SEGA	1 PLAYER AVAILABLE 3RD QTR.

San Francisco RUSH 2049











Drive through the streets of San Francisco just once, and you're in for a unique experience... Los Angeles is truly host to the world's worst drivers (I'm just counting the days till some soccer mom runs me over in her SUV), but the Bay Area has streets that'll send the most hardened driver to the loony bin. Now, imagine driving through a version of this landscape fifty years in the future, with cars too powerful to describe...

That's the premise behind *San Francisco Rush 2049*, which is currently in the final stages of the transition from arcade to Dreamcast. The game is set in the year 2049 (hence the title), and is focused just as much on stunt work as it is on racing madness. Don't get me wrong, the enemy AI will put anyone's skills to the test, but the main opponent remains what it's always been—the tracks.

The terrain is unmistakably that of San Fran, but things have changed dramatically in fifty years... The familiar landmarks (such as the Transamerica building) are still discernable, but the tracks have more in common with "The Jetsons" than they do with *Metropolis Street Racer*. *SF Rush* is a game of shortcuts, and believe me, there are more in this game than in a Reubus marathon; duck into the right tunnel, surpass long segments of the track and you'll come out in the lead before you know it. Some are easy to reach, and others—well, a bit of speed and perhaps the wings will be needed to reach them...

"Wings," you say? Yes, wings. The Batmobile doesn't have anything on these cars, because, with just the press of a button, wings will extend from both sides and increase control over roll and pitch dramatically. This is most handy when you come flying off a massive overpass at 160 mph and can see your reflection in a huge, futuristic building just before you 'merge' with it and become a very nice charcoal lump on the street. The game also features a dedicated Stunt mode, in which drivers can really put their flying skills to the test. If you've ever wanted to know exactly how many barrel rolls you can pull off and still land reasonably well (my personal record is sixty-four), then this is your calling.

Thankfully, the control's come a long way since the original game was released, and the game now features more options than ever before. After selecting one of ten cars (with a few hidden ones, of course), players have their choice of engine, tires, handling and torque, plus a myriad of other options. Each one will affect handling, though, so a little trial and error will be required before finding a successful combination (i.e., one that'll prevent constant spinouts).

Right now, the game looks like it's close to completion, but Midway's still sticking to its estimated September release date—which will not be in time to take advantage of net play. You will be able to upload/download times, which, along with the inclusion of a new battle mode, should make for a solid racing game. K





Developer - Midway	1-4 Players	KODOMO: Anyone get the number
Publisher - Midway	Available Sep '00	of that passing office tower?

PREVIEW



Dreamcast

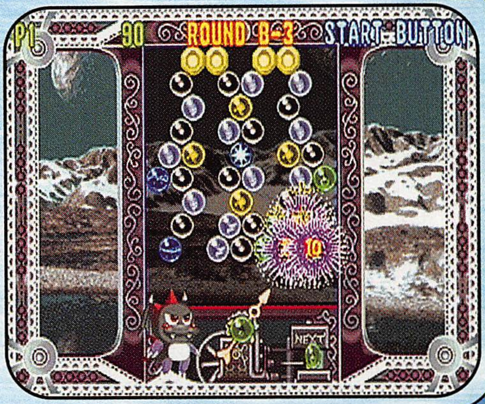
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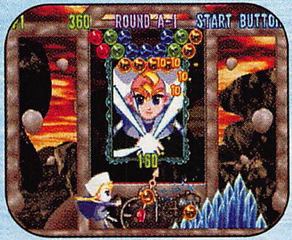
Dreamcast

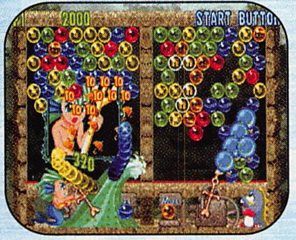
Bust A Move 4 - Acclaim

The 4th game in the *Bust A Move* series makes its way to the DC, with more spherical madness than Reubus on bowling night. I'm struggling to imagine how the game can be improved over the 3rd *BAM*, but rest assured that you'll be treated to one of the best puzzle games around (and the only game our most recent intern could actually beat someone at).











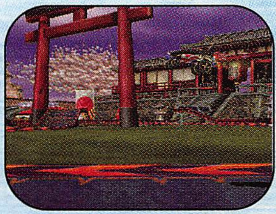


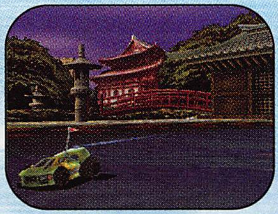
GP Stunt Racer - Infogrames

With fast speed, over the top jumps and top notch competition, *GP Stunt Racer* is going to offer something new to the always crowded racing genre. Take futuristic racing cars and put them in jump-laden tracks and you've got the general idea of the game. You'll not only have to win, but get the wildest, maddest air while doing so, collecting points for each combination that you execute and jump you land. Expect nothing short of pure racing goodness, combined with the graphical prowess of the Dreamcast, to make for one very exciting game come this Fall.











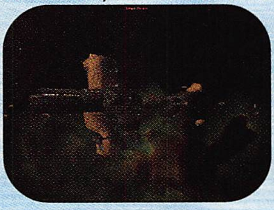




Starlancer - Crave

Mix equal amounts of Twisted Metal and Colony Wars and the result is Starlancer, giving you an opportunity to wipe the solar system clean of all opposition and enemies.









PlayStation

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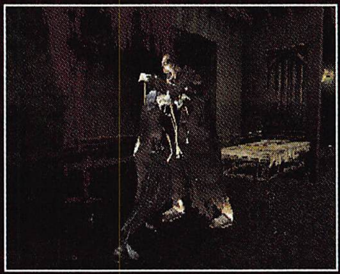
Things haven't been easy for Herbert Wallace... After being battered, bruised and experimented on, he awakes to find himself imprisoned in a cell. He then manages to escape, only to come face to 'face' with the mutated undead that are all under the control of a madman—Adam Crowly. At each turn, he must battle these demons, these ghouls that seek only to flay the flesh from his wretched corpse. Worst of all, he's stuck inside a game that's just plain bad...

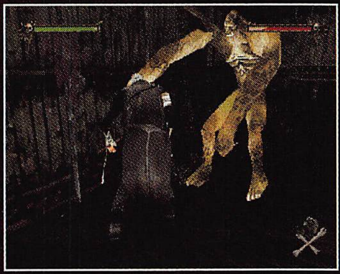
In a day and age when politicians jump on the "video game violence" bandwagon (and I think you know which side I'm referring to) faster than Fury balks at driving to lunch, games that not only revel in but also bleed ultra-violence are few and far between. The days of free-flowing carnage have come and gone, and I'm beginning to understand why most companies are turning their development efforts toward 'kinder and gentler' titles, avoiding the verbal brunt of the uneducated masses. Then there's Kalisto...

The company that made a name for itself with the 1997 release of *Nightmare Creatures* is back with a sequel. This time, though, things haven't improved, and what was once a novel concept and decent game has mutated into the bastard child of *Splatterhouse* and *Tomb Raider* faster than plasma pumps from a severed head.

Strangely enough, that bloodletting is now the main focus of the game... Gone are the days in which players were presented with a definite task and a familiar map feature—now, "kill everything



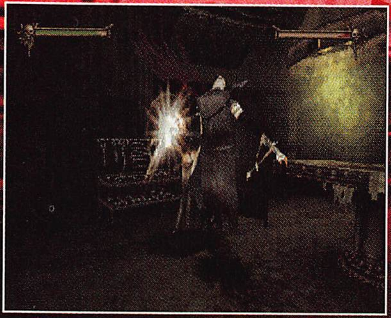




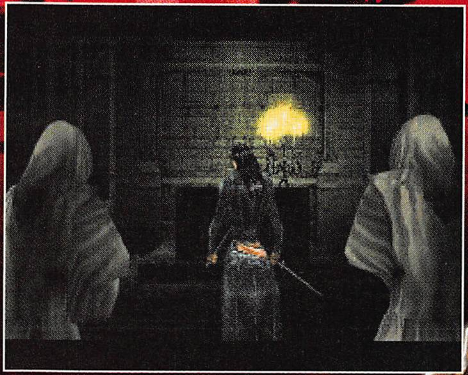


and find the keys/flip the switches" gameplay rules. Herbert never goes anywhere in *Nightmare Creatures 2* without his trusty hand ax (the only primary weapon that can be equipped), and trust me, it isn't long before he puts his butcher skills to the test. Unfortunately, it isn't much longer than that before the combat system goes south...

Yes, Kalisto's modified the controls so that, using the analog stick, players can sidestep with greater ease (always a plus), and can automatically switch to a 'lock-on' mode when battle begins. Unfortunately, that seems to be the extent of the upgrade—the rest of it (i.e., the speed of the game and the enemy AI) has endured the "Eggo childhood" (read: no attention at all). Every monster encountered seems to follow









the same pattern: attack, then back up and stand around. Combine this with the fact that only one enemy will engage you at any one time, even when two are in the area, and suddenly, the game gets a lot easier; all that's necessary is a little timing. Sub-weapons and attacks are also available, as they were in the first game, ranging from a deadly gun attack to a flock of bugs that explodes on its target's head.

Herbert also sports two 'refined' combat abilities, amputation and fatality, and with these two basic combination attacks (both three-button variations), one can take the arms off of almost any attacking foe. Take off both arms, and they'll stagger around moaning, helpless until you decide to finish them off (my current record is only limited by the time it took me to get to and from Fatburger).

Inflict enough damage, and a 'fatality' option will appear; press two more buttons, and Herbert will launch into a maniacal frenzy and hack away until only a scarlet pool remains... with some ugly 'birds' floating in it. Unfortunately, there's only one fatality per enemy, and as much as I'd like to indulge in the fantasy of whacking Marilyn Manson into the next life, the fatality scenes dull the edge of what could have been a visceral thrill—now it's like watching an episode of Itchy and Scratchy... only funnier.

At the beginning of each level, the narrator outlines the goal—for example, to get to a prescribed location in one of the massive levels. Speaking of levels, I give Kalisto credit here; *NC2*'s level layout is the best feature in the game. They are, in a word, huge, and exude the kind of sinister ambiance that would put them squarely at home in any NIN video. They're dark, brooding places, as well, and I can appreciate the 'look' that Kalisto was going for, but unfortunately, their presentation is so sub-par that they just fail to draw the player in. Clipping problems and broken textures rear their collective ugly heads quite often. Gamers can frequently look through walls and detect where passages are or see exactly what's around the next corner.

The scariest thing about *NC2*, though, is not the theme (which is accentuated well by a handful of Rob Zombie tunes), but the fact that a game this mediocre was produced this late in the PlayStation's life cycle. When you've staggered and wandered through endless catacombs and passageways, slaughtering one enemy that looks just like the last with the same slashing technique, it's tough to find the inspiration to stay up for hours on end just to beat the game. Seriously, if the stuff of nightmares is truly this bad, I'm beginning to appreciate my insomnia for the blessing that it is...

Kodomo obviously used a hack-and-slash technique for "writing" this review.







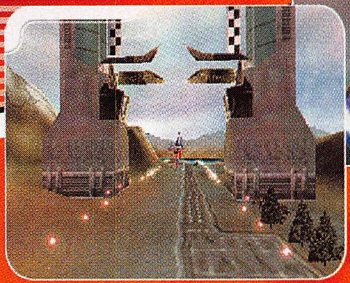
Viewpoint Score	Developer - Kalisto	1 Player	Kodomo: Your worst
:64	Publisher - Konami	Available Now	nightmare realized...

REVIEW

N.GEN RACING









I have to admit it—Psygnosis' *Wipeout* series ranks among my favorites. There just aren't many racers out there that match the speed and thrill that it has to offer. Unfortunately, there isn't an incredible variety between the three games in the series... and that's where Curly Monsters comes in. A six-man team of former Psygnosis programmers has been hard at work on another PlayStation racer which might just give *Wipeout* a run for its money. There's one important difference between the games, though... *N-Gen Racing* doesn't just feature air cars zipping around a set track, it features jet planes.

It's true, and you don't have to look too far to see their influence, because with the addition of aviation comes the ability to change altitude. Gamers are no longer forced to stick to the track (though it's still a game of nap-of-the-Earth flying), but can gain some altitude and actually 'cut a few corners,' so if one happens to get stuck at a tricky point on the course, a simple tug on the flight stick might just do the trick.

The premise of the game is simple... In the year 2012, a state of global peace is finally reached, and military planes are outfitted with racing systems to compete in the N-Gen circuit. There are fourteen tracks in the circuit, and the goal is to pick up various upgrades and finish as high as possible. Ironically, winners can also gain access to fighter-grade planes, which sport missiles, rockets and the almighty chain gun of justice to mow down any racer that gets too 'uppity.'

The track layout (if one can really call it that) consists of a path offset with massive lights on each side, sort of like a runway. Stray outside the track, and an instant time penalty will be assessed. Each plane comes with an afterburner preinstalled, but pilots must fly through strategically targeted rings in order to charge the afterburner meter up.









There are four classes of planes in all, and each can be modified with a wide assortment of parts to enhance performance. You say you want to go faster? You might want to spring for the Afterburner Doubler, or the new engine that'll push your top speed close to 1,000 mph. The only downside is that parts cost money, and the only way to earn that money is by racing in each class's cup races, which isn't as simple as it sounds... Thankfully, the game will include an Arcade control option (as well as Pro control, which lets you turn on a dime) to accommodate all levels of ability, from the hardest-core to the weakest sauce.

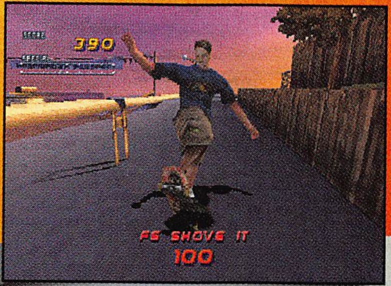
Right now, the game features fourteen tracks and forty planes to peruse, enough for even the most casual gamer that suffers from Attention Deficit Disorder (hey, look, it's Fury... the human). One player just isn't enough these days, though, so Curly Monsters has included a split-screen mode and a 'power ball' game that's unique to this mode. The object is to pick up the ball and hold it as long as possible. The trick is that, with the ball, your plane will fly slower and your weapons will be unusable, so the task quickly becomes a challenge.

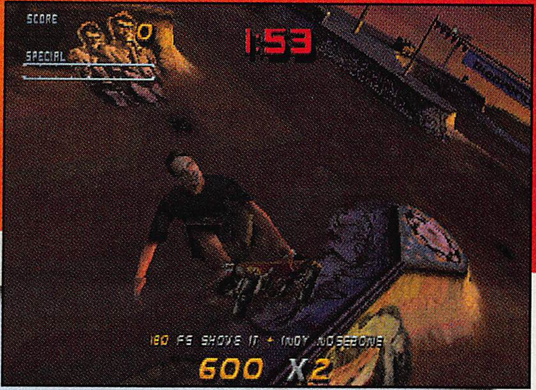
Graphically, the game's flying in the right direction, but still needs some tweaking to alleviate some minor pop-up and broken textures. Also expect some wicked tunes to back up the flying action—something that'll absolutely necessitate a soundtrack version. Curly Monsters still has a way to go until the second-quarter release of *N-Gen*, but keep your eyes open, 'cause this just might be the title that finally shatters the sound barrier... K



UPDATE			
	KODOMO: *N-GEN*-IOUS	DEVELOPER - CURLY MONSTERS	1-2 PLAYERS
		PUBLISHER - INFOGRAMES	AVAILABLE 3RD QTR.



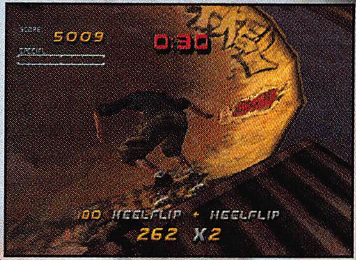


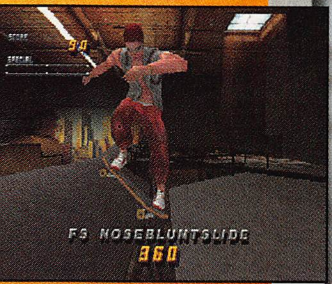


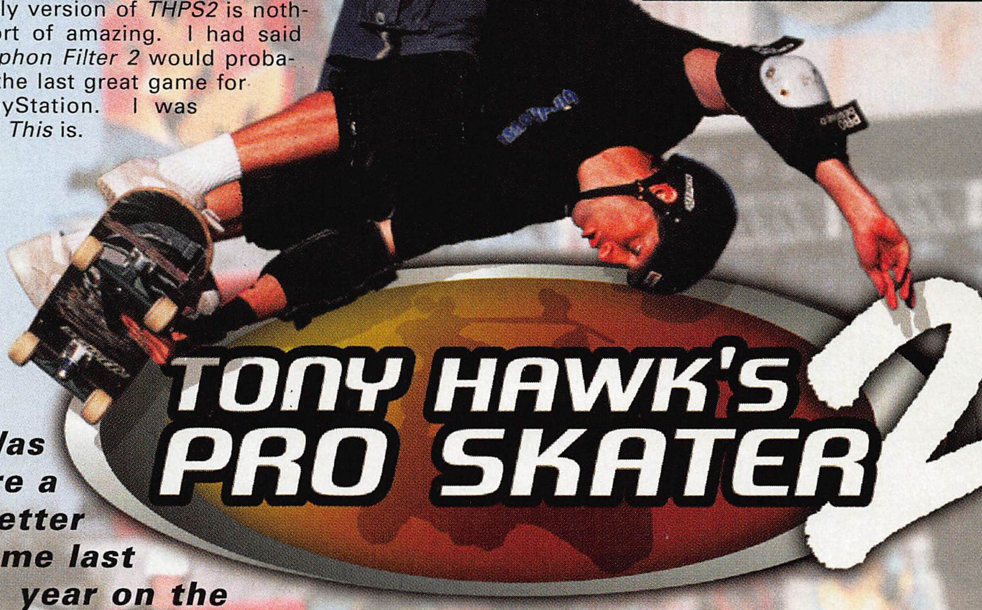
Was there a better game last year on the PlayStation than *Tony Hawk Pro Skater?* I could make a couple of decent arguments, but even playing my own devil's advocate, I'd lose. *THPS* was nothing short of a phenomenon—it exploded on the becalmed 32-bit scene and, just for a moment, made me forget all about the impending launch of the Dreamcast and PS2.

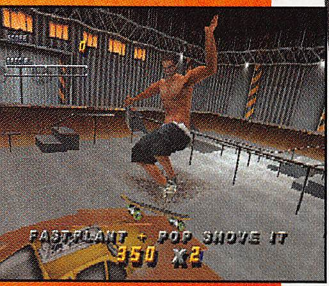
Now, a year has gone by, and the boys at Neversoft have been busy as bees... They're jumping right into the sequel, and it seems impossible that they could have put together such an incredible alpha so quickly. And yes, this early version of *THPS2* is nothing short of amazing. I had said that *Syphon Filter 2* would probably be the last great game for the PlayStation. I was wrong. *This* is.



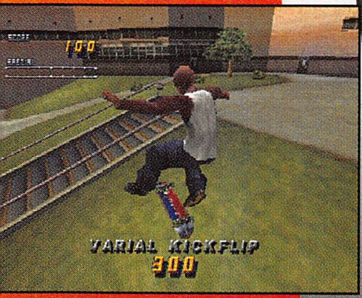


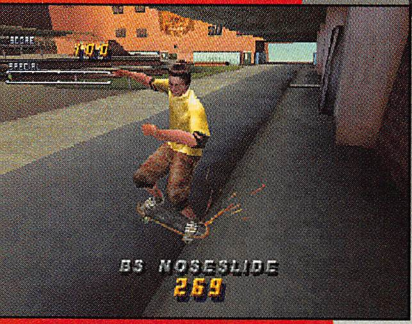






Was there a better game last year on the PlayStation than Tony Hawk Pro Skater?





In true sequel fashion, *THPS2* is nothing more than an extension of the original... You won't see any new ground broken here. What you will see is a greater number of playable skaters and a myriad of new moves and play modes, parks and features not included in the first game. I'll go ahead and say it right now: *THPS2,* when complete, will be the most satisfying PlayStation game of the year.

THPS2 will not only feature twelve selectable pro skaters, but will also boast a new custom character builder, so players can model their own skaters from the ground up—change their clothes, accessories and trick sets. Or, if its existing skaters are too good to pass up, they can be adjusted to better suit gamers' styles. Don't go messing with Tony, though—that's sacrilegious!

The parks will all be modeled after real-life skate parks, and have been expanded to include foreign faves such as the Marseilles Skatepark in France. There's no word yet on how many parks will be included in the final, but be satisfied in knowing that they'll all be bigger than those found in *THPS.* Expect many more secret areas to test your skills as well.

THPS2's best feature, however, will undoubtedly be its park editor. Neversoft's put together a fantastic, easy-to-use editor that enables users to create parks comparable to the ones already programmed into the game—even recreate some of the parks found in the original! Better yet, these parks will take up minimal memory space; no more than a couple of blocks each.

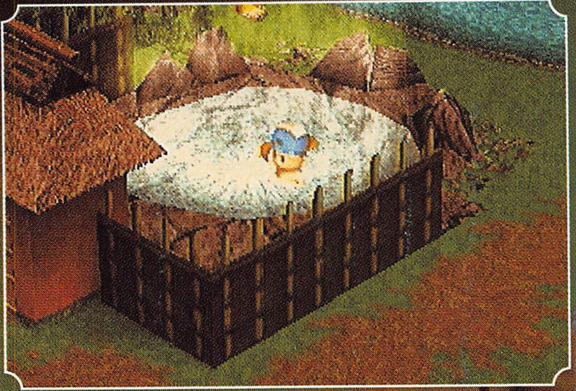
If this doesn't get you salivating, then you're way beyond help. *Tony Hawk Pro Skater 2* will blow people away when it ships... I guarantee it. And, as if that weren't exciting enough, the Dreamcast version will be coming out shortly after the PS release. D'oh! J



DEVELOPER - NEVERSOFT	1-2 PLAYERS	THE JUDGE: THIS MAY TOP MY ROTISSERIE AS BEST PURCHASE OF THE YEAR!
PUBLISHER - ACTIVISION	AVAILABLE 4TH QTR.	

P PREVIEW

Harvest Moon
Back To Nature





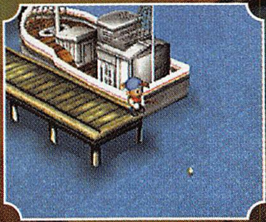








My dad's a Scotsman, and hence, I've heard my fair share of "When I was a wee laddie..." stories. When he wasn't in school, he was working the land, digging for coal and generally becoming the inspiration for Francis Begbie of "Trainspotting" fame. Suffice it to say that the picture he painted has done little to inspire me to return to my ancestral roots. I'm just not too keen on the idea of living in a mud shack and chopping wood in the highlands while wearing a skirt—uhhh, kilt.







That, however, is exactly where Natsume comes in and saves the day... Natsume found success with its premier RPG, *Harvest Moon*, on various Nintendo platforms, and is currently porting its sequel to the PlayStation. *Harvest Moon: Back To Nature* features a boy, his dog and more farm animals than Eggo can cook in a weekend, putting a new spin on resource management in the process.





Yes, things have changed in the ten years since your last visit to Grandfather's ranch. The land has become barren, and Grandpa... well, let's just say he's doing his part by feeding the worms. You have every reason not to return, and yet you made a promise to a certain girl in town those many years ago—and now, the time has come to fulfill that promise and make ol' Grandpa proud.



The objective, then, is simple: Get the farm back up to snuff within three years or the town mayor will close it down. The path won't be easy, but you'll have total control over almost all aspects of the farm. Decide each day how much time to dedicate to growing crops or training animals. Crops will play a pivotal role, naturally, but it'll take some experimentation to find the perfect balance between location and type. If you want the cows and sheep to produce more than the average yield, brush them at least once a day and give them some 'quality time.' Be wary, though—toil in the fields too much or in the rain, and you'll fall ill and be forced to spend the day in bed (which Howard Hughes—er, Fury now does only two days out of the week).





Fortunately, there's much more to the world of *Harvest Moon* than simply tooling around the farm with man's best friend. There'll be over sixty unique characters to interact with (including five girls in the town to woo) and over 100 recipes to cook. Players can upgrade tools (can you say "super hoe???") through five levels—but if that isn't enough, there'll also be non-linear gameplay and new mini-games such as horse races and tomato fights. The PS version will also feature a few unique items such as the Wool Maker and Cheese Maker (a.k.a. 'Cerberus in a Capcom game').

Can you restore the family farm to its former glory days? Can you fall in love and live happily ever after? Well, if *HM: Back to Nature* lives up to its predecessor, expect to spend more than one weekend finding out... K







PREVIEW KODOMO: Please, please be good enough to save me from the evil clutches of *Everquest*!	Developer - Natsume	1 Player
	Publisher - Natsume	Available July

DUKE NUKEM
PLANET OF THE BABES

Duke's back! The king of LCD gaming (uh, that's 'LCD' as in 'lowest common denominator') has returned in yet another tongue-in-cheek bloodbath that's sure to excite jarheads the world over (and frighten those 'cosmopolitan' types)! Yes, the original *Duke Nukem* started a grand tradition, and *Planet of the Babes* is yet another nail in the coffin of decent society.

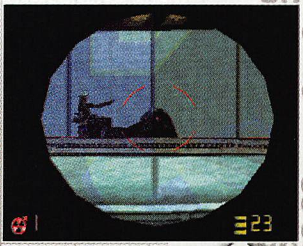
So what is our muscle-bound hero up to this time, you ask? Well, Duke's been handed the most important mission in human history—basically, an army of extraterrestrial low-lifers seizes control of Earth and enslaves all of its ladies, and it's up to Duke to save them. On the upside, it seems that all of the fuglies of the world (I, of course, say that with love) have disappeared, leaving only multitudes of Dixie Chicks. Unfortunately (or fortunately?), the male of the species is all but extinct as well, and the fate of mankind is left twisting in the wind. Can Duke expel the vile Martians? Will he have enough energy (not to mention fluids) to help repopulate the Earth? Did anyone already experience this game when it was a movie called "Hell Comes to Frogtown?"

All joking aside, what will *Duke Nukem: Planet of the Babes* offer you, the gamer, other than a fairly popular male pornographic fantasy? Well, it'll feature sixteen levels chock full of bloody goodness—pig cops, mutant chicks (O.K., so some fuglies remain), abhorrent gorillas and a multitude of high-power weapons to blast them with, including a laser gun, a rocket launcher and a combat shotgun.

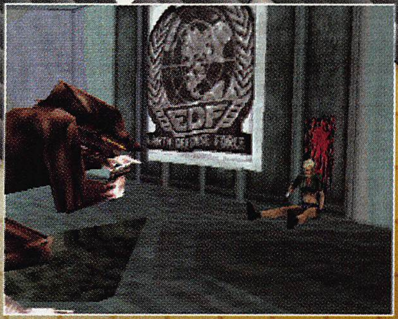
And, as in *Half-Life,* there'll also be a host of AI-controlled NPCs that'll assist Duke in his mission. Exactly what services these NPC babes can be cajoled into performing I have yet to discover, but I'm hopeful that it'll include more than just the use of their big guns (good lord, did I just say that?). *Planet of the Babes* also tips its hat to *Half-Life* with the use of in-game, real-time cinematics that lend a movie-like feel to the game, propelling the story to its explosive climax.

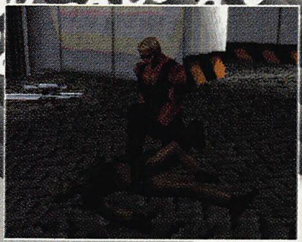
I can't think of a more entertaining single-player experience, but if you can manage to scare up a buddy to play with you, then you can try out the obligatory multi-player deathmatch mode. It looks as though there'll only be six levels in that mode, however, so I fail to see how it'll add much to the game's life. Ultimately, though, it won't matter—we all know how shoddy most FPS multi-player modes are, so chances are that those six levels will see little playtime anyway... J













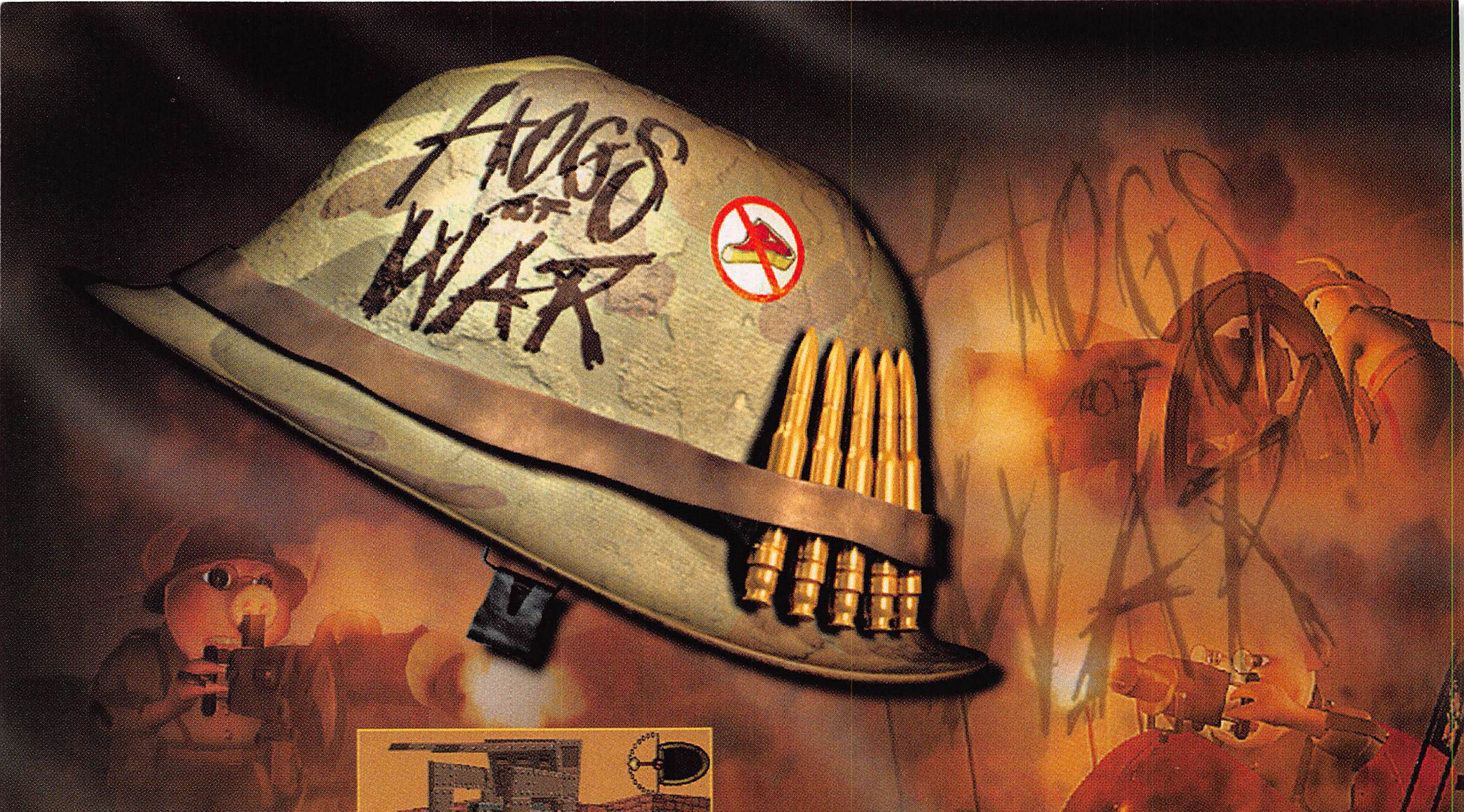


DEVELOPER - 3D REALMS	1-2 PLAYERS	THE JUDGE: IF THERE EVER WAS A
PUBLISHER - GT INTERACTIVE	AVAILABLE 3RD QTR.	HERO THAT DESERVED A MULLET...

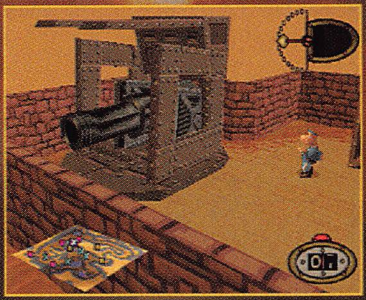
P PREVIEW



PlayStation











I hesitate to use a strictly American metaphor to describe a British game, but I don't think there's any avoiding it: *Hogs of War* comes straight outta left field. I had no idea what this game was about when I got it; I feared some awful *Road Rash* clone featuring Harleys! Well, smack my cheeks and call me Flo, 'cause *Hogs Of War* turned out to be another refreshing romp in that distinctly British style—and better yet, it wasn't a Formula One game.

I've been wrestling with how to describe this game, and all I can come up with is that *Hogs Of War* is a cross between *Worms* and *General Chaos* in a 3D environment... Players lead a squad of fatigue-wearing pigs, and must assemble them into an elite fighting unit. The successful commander must take control of the continent while staving off the other five armies.

The game features twenty-five missions. Gamers can play as French, British, Russian, German, Japanese or American swine. Each force relies heavily on humorous stereotypes to enhance the comedic elements of the game, and the voice acting will have you tickled... well, pink. The weapons (and their effects on the piggies) are also rather humorous. Whether you're slaughtering hogs with grenades or goring them with bayonets, expect a laugh a minute (O.K., maybe not every minute, but some).

The gameplay features a turn-based combat system, much like that of *Worms*. Players have a set time limit to complete each turn, but essentially will spend most of that time running around trying to position themselves to inflict the greatest damage. In addition, the hogs can specialize in one of several fields, including espionage, heavy artillery and medical. They can also collect merits to earn themselves promotions.

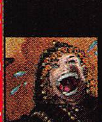
At this point, I have yet to be tested in the strategy department. I've had a lot of success (and fun) just bum-rushing the enemy units and spamming them with frontal attacks. The weapons I've been using aren't as creative as those in *Worms*, so weapon strategies tend to be limited... This could detract from the one-player game, but the two-player mode should still offer some strategic depth.

I hope that the final version of this game lives up to my growing expectations. *Hogs Of War* is creative, humorous and boasts a nice engine, and it would be really nice to see it all come together in a title that isn't as generic as most games currently available for the PlayStation are. J





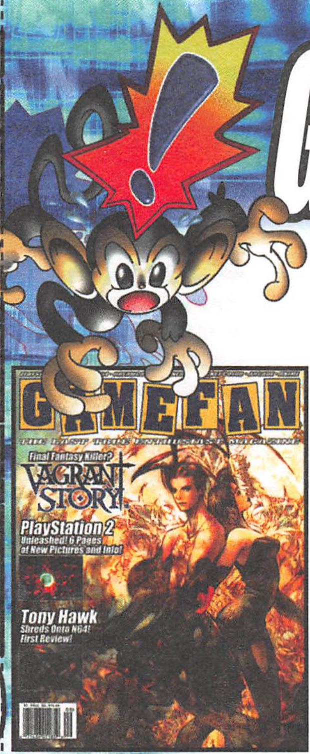




THE JUDGE: SQUEAL LIKE A PIG, NED, SQUEAL LIKE A PIG!	DEVELOPER - INFOGRAMES UK	1-2 PLAYERS
	PUBLISHER - INFOGRAMES	AVAILABLE 2ND QTR.

P PREVIEW

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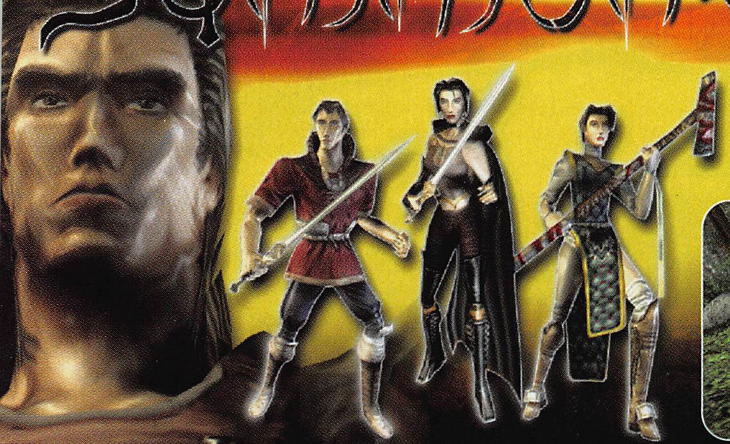
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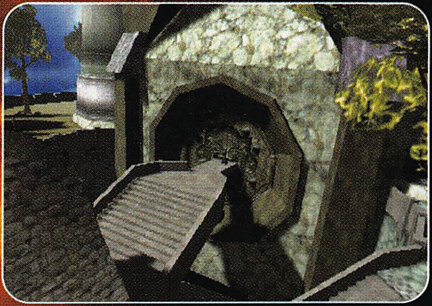
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Summoner









Four years ago, THQ was the butt of more jokes than Fury (who, by the way, has recently discovered how to type Roman numerals in MS Word). But now, it's developing what might be the first RPG released Stateside for the PS2, and its miraculous journey from chump to champ seems fittingly marked by what will surely be one of the coolest launch titles for the system.

You mean the first RPG for PS2 owners will be an American one?! Egad! What is the gaming world coming to? Well, it's coming to its senses, as far as I'm concerned... American RPGs have always been a step above their Japanese counterparts in terms of originality and depth... not to mention gameplay. "*Final Fantasy*," you say? "*Dungeons & Dragons*," I retort. "*Shining Force*?" Bah, give me *Fallout* any day...

Cheer up, though, because Volition is borrowing heavily from traditional Japanese RPGs. It's clear that the developers are greatly influenced by titles such as *Final Fantasy* and *Phantasy Star*, so it looks like RPG fans across the board will be pleased with *Summoner.*

Enter a world of vast kingdoms, mystical beasts and powerful magic controlled by casters known as Summoners... These most revered (and feared) beings are marked at birth, and have the ability to summon mighty beasts. And to create portals for these creatures to pass through, Summoners need only possess the ancient summoning rings. Once here, the beasts will do their master's bidding.

One of the last summoners is a man named Joseph. Many would see their powers as a gift from the gods, but Joseph sees them as a curse. It seems that Joseph's childhood village was attacked by marauding bandits, and in an attempt to defend his hamlet, he summoned a demon to destroy the attackers. Sadly, in the end, it was his whole village that was slaughtered, and he was exiled by the remaining few settlers as a harbinger of evil. Before he knew it, he was damned to live out his days as a feared outcast. Redemption is at hand, though; eventually, Joseph is called upon to purge his world of an invading force, and he reluctantly sets out to collect the summoning rings to use his powers to defend his homeland.

Summoner boasts some stout graphics, a quest-based story line, and a hybrid engine that combines real-time strategy and turn-based combat. Some may dismiss *Summoner* as nothing more than a *Final Fantasy VIII* wannabe (those summoning animations do look a tad familiar), but it will be more than that. Its questing parties will contain up to five members, its combat will involve much more strategy (terrain and elevation come into play), and no one in the game wields a sword four times their size.

In *Summoner,* we could be looking at one of the best titles for the PS2. With any luck, it'll show the world that U.S. developers are more than capable of making great console RPGs... even when borrowing from the Japanese.







DEVELOPER - VOLITION	1 PLAYER	THE JUDGE: AN AMERICAN
PUBLISHER - THQ	AVAILABLE FALL	FF8? WHAT WILL EGGO THINK?

P PREVIEW

COMING SOON

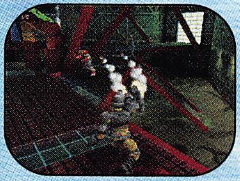
Oni - Take 2

Take 2 has done the smart thing, and decided to give PS2 owners a chance to run through the Oni world. A distinct anime style, hand to hand combat and wild gun play will make for a very interesting game come this fall. If the PlayStation 2 version winds up anything like the PC verstion that was on display at the 1999 E3, I will die a very happy gamer (well, only if the massive mechs and armed guards can catch me first).

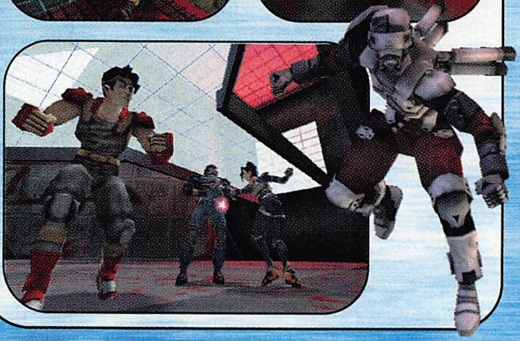












Evil Dead - THQ

Ash, is coming to your PlayStation, bringing hordes of the undead and might be the closest thing to heaven (or is that hell?) on your PS.







Midnight Club - Take 2

Racing through city streets with competition in tow, MC pits you as a lead footed driver in charge of some seriously juiced muscle cars.







RPG Maker - Agetec

The title says it all here. Take your time and design a totally unique RPG, using a vast amount of selectable options, then give it a go.







Mort The Chicken - Crave

This one's got charisma written all over it and looks to kick *Ape Escape* off the "Wacky Fun" pedestal (if ECM doesn't do it first). Expect to get some laughs, along with platformer fun, later this year.







Soul Reaver 2 - Eidos

With the success of LOK:SR, you knew that a sequel was in the works. Expect to have the same great level design, vampyric nasties and extra touches that made the first game a theme-fan favorite.









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NINTENDO64

Review

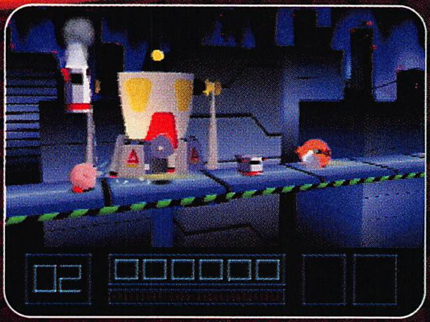
Kirby 64

Update

Turok 3 65





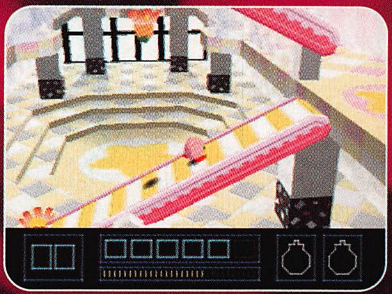


For a moment, forget about racking up kills in a heated game of *Maken X* or performing tracheotomies in *Soul Reaver*. Take a deep breath and gently place your Dreamcast pad on the floor... you've slaughtered enough baddies in *Berserk* for today. Now, calmly pull your N64 out of the closet and brush away the thick layer of dust that's collected over the years. Remember your good friend the Fun Machine? It's been a long time, hasn't it? Indeed, if you've been playing the likes of *Syphon Filter 2*, *Zombie Revenge* and *RE: Code Veronica* nonstop, then this is definitely for your own good. Now, pop either *Mario 64* or *Zelda OOT* into the cartridge slot and power up your system... Hear those classic tunes—soothing, aren't they? This is precisely why *Kirby 64* has sold in excess of 500,000 units in Japan as of this writing (the same nation that's currently fixated on Sony's wonder console). Like a Treasure or Sonic Team game, a quality Nintendo cartridge just has that certain special something, a seemingly perfect appeal of rock-solid control, innovative play mechanics and lush graphics that completely entrance willing participants... After all, it can't always be about anti-aliasing, texture quality or frame-rates. Sometimes, it's just gotta be about fun.

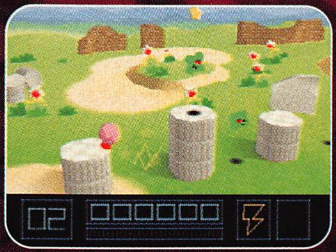








How time does fly... It's been over three long years since everyone's favorite pink puffball starred in his very own adventure. Kirby was certainly a welcome face on the Super Nintendo, with four titles under his extra-large belt, but, like Samus and Kid Icarus <sigh>, he nearly became another 64-bit absentee... Initially, Kirby was set to star in a 3D hoverboard racer dubbed *Kirby's Air Ride*, which looked quite interesting in an early Nintendo promo tape. The game met an early death, though, drowned in the wake of *Wave Race* and *Mario 64*. Sadly, it seemed that Kirby was nearly down for the count—but thanks to his role in *Super Smash Bros.*, the Big N found renewed interest in the vacuum-headed hero.





Enter a completely reworked *Kirby 64*, which now joins the N64's 2.5D ranks with *Goemon's Great Adventure* and *Yoshi's Story*. In his newest adventure, Kirby must defend the cosmic home of a band of space fairies from an evil black cloud (O.K., so the plot isn't exactly Shakespeare). In an attempt to swipe the fairies' magical crystal, a struggle ensues, and the gem shatters. Fragments of the precious stone litter the adjacent planets (note: In real life, stealing fairies' crystals can result in painful slaps and deafening screams), and Kirby and friends must then scour the solar system to retrieve all the lost pieces and restore peace... to the home of the fairies (hey, did I mention that I'm a big fan of Camaros and hunting?!?).



Visually, *K64* resembles an SNES game, and will likely disappoint graphic hounds set in their polygonal ways. But, save for titles appearing on the upcoming Game Boy Advance (can you say 'more powerful 2D hardware than the Saturn?!'), simple games like *K64* are soon to become ancient relics. Aside from the basic visuals, *K64* truly bursts with some amazing gameplay—this is where the game gets interesting, and not surprisingly, frighteningly addictive...

Kirby's most celebrated attribute has been his ability to suck enemies in and utilize their powers (see *Kirby's Dreamland 3* and *Super Smash Bros.*). *K64*, however, takes that basic play mechanic and expands on it tenfold. Most enemies in the game represent one of seven abilities that Kirby can harness: fire, stone, ice, needle, bomb, spark and cutter. Alone, each ability offers a unique attack with spikes, boomerangs, fireballs, etc.—but combine them, and the real fun begins. Mix fire and bomb, and Kirby can explode in a series of *Fantavision*-like fireworks. Or combine two stone symbols together, and Kirby transforms into a giant stone creature. The possibilities are endless, and things like a burning broadsword or a Darth Maul double light saber are only the beginning!

Kirby 64's only Achilles heel seems to be its pace... Things tend to play out very slowly in *K64*, and the levels unfortunately don't offer much in the way of challenges (in other words, it's a perfect game if you're among the world's many Furys). At times, certain bosses require that you bust out a little gaming skill, but nothing so difficult that a few continues couldn't solve... And luckily, unlike *Yoshi's Story*, you won't beat this one in a single sit-down... It's not nearly as long as *Yoshi's Island*, but is certainly a decent-sized cart for a title of its caliber.

Tekken Tag, Marvel Vs. Capcom 2, DOA2... bah, give me *Kirby 64* any day of the week! Games like this are a rare treat, my friends; they hark back to the glory days of 16-bit gaming. Forget about fancy lighting effects for a minute, and put aside your jaded opinions—*K64*'s a solid title, and a nice escape from the often boring and uninspired realm of 3D.

Fury doesn't think Bruno Kirby should be cast in the rumored theatrical release of Kirby 64.

Viewpoint Score :90	Developer - Hal Lab.	1-4 Players	Fury: Just because he's pink
	Publisher - Nintendo	Available Now Japan	doesn't mean he's *pink*...

REVIEW



In March, we broke the news that the third installment to the wildly successful *Turok* series *(Rage Wars* doesn't count) was coming this summer to an N64 near you. Well, *Turok 3: Shadow of Oblivion* is definitely coming, and it will mark one of the few bright spots on the N64's release schedule this year, but it may also mark the end of the franchise on the system. Acclaim's announced that it will cease development of N64 titles, and no other *Turok* titles are currently in development, so it seems fair to assume that *T3* will be the final chapter for the stumbling system.

Naturally, then, we thought it would be appropriate to give an update on this highly anticipated title. We've seen many tasty tidbits of *T3* since March, and we just returned from Austin, Texas, home of Team Iguana—oops, I mean Acclaim Studios—so now seemed like the perfect time to lay it on our readers.

At the time of our March issue, many details of the actual story line were sketchy. Now, however we have the whole scoop. Joshua is old news, it seems—*Turok 3* is all about his older sister, Danielle, and kid brother Joseph. Both have unique abilities, and can access different areas within each level to take different paths, Hence, finishing the game as Danielle will render a different (if only slightly) experience than finishing it as Joseph—a bonus for the true *Turok* sausages out there.

Here's the story line: An omnipotent entity known as 'Oblivion' is slowly oozing into the world, destroying all it touches and turning man and machine into twisted, mindless minions. Oblivion also thinks you're responsible for its brush with death, so it's hell-bent on your destruction as well as that of Earth. Danielle and Joseph must race against time to destroy Oblivion before he destroys everything. It's exciting stuff.

Acclaim is working hard to ensure that this *Turok* feels much more organic than its predecessors. Many scripted events are being implemented to make the levels seem more like living worlds in which the action unfolds whether Danielle or Joseph are present or not. At one point, they may be thrust into the chaos of a city under martial law. As they sneak through the wasteland of burned buildings and deserted streets, the local police engage in bloody battles with Oblivion's minions and chaos erupts all around them. If they stay aloof, the rioters won't notice them. If they stray too close to the action, however, they'll quickly become a part of the fracas.

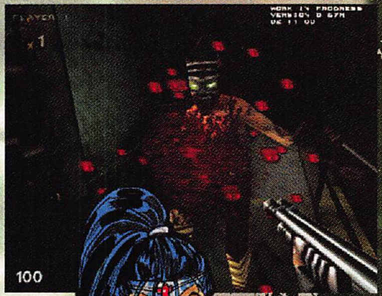
As it is, this game blazes. Acclaim already made the mistake of relying on the N64 Expansion Pak for the last *Turok* game, so it's designing and optimizing *Turok 3* without it. What this means is that, even without the extra RAM fueling the Fun Machine, *T3* will look better and run at a higher frame-rate than its predecessors. Acclaim insists that, when complete, *T3* will never run below 30fps. Whether or not it can pull this off has yet to be seen, but nonetheless, the game will have some impressive effects in both the single-player and multi-player modes!

Speaking of multi-player—*T3* will boast a series of beefy multi-player modes. There'll be eight different ones in all, and each will offer a very different experience. There are the standard modes, of course, like CTF and DM, but players can also opt for a game of Color Tag or Arsenal of War.

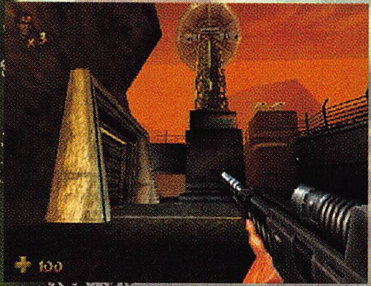
Color Tag is a very cool mode, in which you must turn all players the same color as yourself. Hit an opponent and he turns your color—then, in turn, he tries to turn others the same color. By the same token, anytime you get hit, you'll turn the color of the person that sniped you. The game ends when all players have been converted to one color.

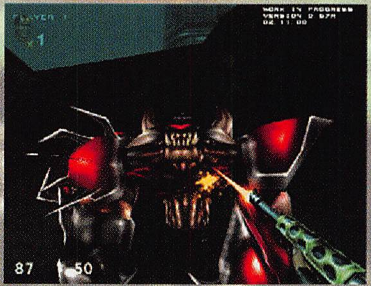
Arsenal of War is another great mode, one that really lets players strut their stuff... Each player starts with a tomahawk, and every time that players dies, he/she picks up the next best weapon available. He who dies most often may end up winning, but the true bad-asses will still be standing with nothing but an axe. There's nothing like whooping up on a guy with a flame-thrower when all you've got is a pointy stick...

There'll be a total of forty-two maps (including the most popular from *Turok*s past) on which to play, so variety in *Turok 3* definitely won't be an issue. The levels are specifically designed for multi-play, as well, so they'll be much more gameplay-friendly than if they were just augmented one-player levels.



With all these gameplay features, modes, maps and visual improvements, it's easy to assess that *Turok 3* will be the best work Acclaim Studios has done to date... Even those that have scoffed at prior *Turok* efforts will have to admit that this is one impressive first-person shooter. **ECM**









TUROK 3
Shadow of Oblivion

UPDATE ECM: Me smoke 'em with my peace pipe o' death	Developer - Acclaim	1-2 Players
	Publisher - Acclaim	Available Summer '00

COMING SOON

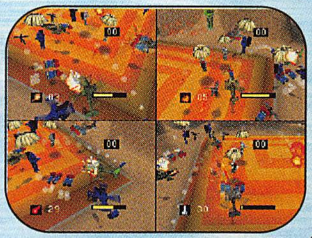
COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON

NINTENDO 64

Army Men Air Attack - 3DO





The familiar fan favorite *Army Men* gets an upgrade and hits the N64. With a focus on helicopter combat (sorry, you'll have to stick to melting the little green guys in the backyard), you'll have to battle through backyards and picnics to save the day.

Banjo Tooie - Nintendo



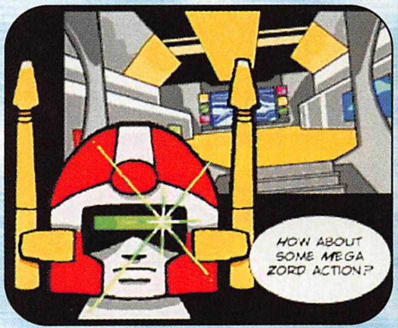
If you were a fan of the first one, get ready for the ultimate in *Banjo* action. If these screens don't get you excited, consider that none of them require the RAM Expansion pack. Rare's got a knack for making some of the best games around (*GoldenEye*, anyone?) and this one's gonna push the power of the N64 to the maximum level.





Power Rangers: Lightspeed Rescue - THQ

Okay, so you say you're a fan of the Power Rangers and haven't yet moved on to Pokemon? Well, THQ's got just the thing for you. Based on the 7th season series, the Power Rangers head into space, pitting you in command of the powerful Mega Zord. With 30 levels, PR: LR will satiate even most diehard fan of the television series.



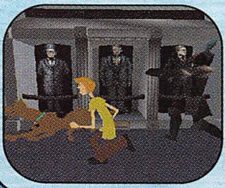


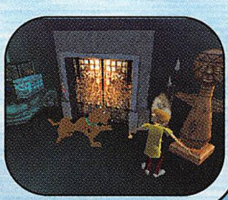


Scooby Doo - THQ



Scooby Dooby Doo, where are you? Coming to the 'fun machine', of course. Expect to see all your favorite characters, as Scooby and Shaggy pal around in search of solving yet another crime (I'll save you some time: It's *always* the old man). Seriously, expect much mayhem to ensue when the Mystery Machine makes a stop.





Rugrats in Paris - THQ

Straight from the Nickelodeon series and upcoming movie, *Rugrats in Paris* will bring mini-game madness to your home. Travel with Stu and the gang to Paris and help him fix his pet Reptar, and play through 16 levels of fun (okay, I'm officially a sell-out now) at the Euro ReptarLand amusement park come November.







GameFan Sports

Now this is a format I could get used to: tons of screens and very little writing. The fact that the majority of sports games that come across my desk are nothing more than rehashes of the year prior, it can get really hard to babble about whats new. "...and this year's version has updated rosters!"



Also changing in my sports section will be what I cover, or in this case, do not cover. I don't know about you, but I am sick and tired of Formula 1 games. REALLY sick and tired of them. So, unless Kid Fan nukes my idea, you will never see that infernal genre on these pages again. Do those F-1 games actually sell well in this country? I know NASCAR is big (and I have grown to accept this), but F-1? There's more personality in the LPGA than F-1 (no, this is not an open invite to make one of those games, either).

Ok, enough of the bitter old man ranting. Let's get down to business. Next week I travel off to E3 to check out this year's crop of next generation sports titles. While I pick on sports franchises for being extremely unoriginal and, for the most part, unchanged from one year to the next, the introduction of a new platform does wonders for breathing life into the genre. The idea of more 128-bit games like *NFL2K* and *NBA2K* has me very excited...



This is nothing but an augmented *NFL Blitz*. If you already have *Blitz* there is no reason to even look at this title. If you have yet to play *Blitz* then check it out if you are into arcade football action. A solid arcade game, this is still a blatant cash run.

G 8 | C 7 | P 7 | M 6 | O 1 | 79



Kurt Warner's Arena Football
PlayStation
Midway

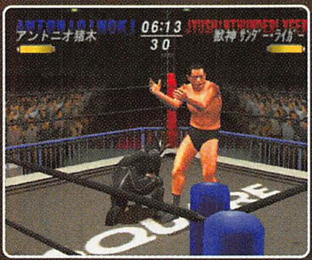


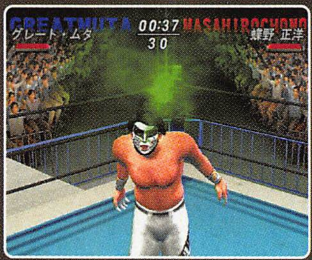
Niño's a little too jaded, if you ask me. Kurt Warner's Super Bowl season is exactly the kind of rags-to-riches, underdog story the USA thrives on. Fast and furious, this game is pretty good, overall... But he is right: If you've played *Blitz*, you've played this.

G 8 | C 8 | P 7 | M 5 | O 6 | 82

All Star Pro Wrestling (PlayStation 2)





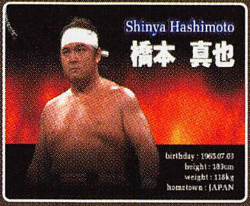




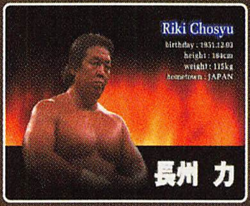


Ok, the chances of this game ever coming out over here are slim to none, but since the rest of the magazine harps on imports, why not me too? Besides, it just looks real cool. *All Star Pro Wrestling* will be for the PlayStation 2 and will feature a bunch of big sweaty guys I have never heard of. But, if they are all as cool looking as Jyushin Thunder Lyger (see pic to the lower left) then I have no problems. Name one dude in the WWF that looks as bad-ass (and totally silly) as that? Let's all pray, though, that this game plays as good as it looks. Lord knows that isn't the case for Square's baseball title.

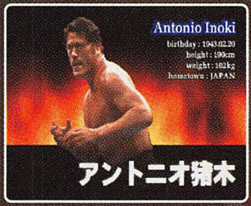






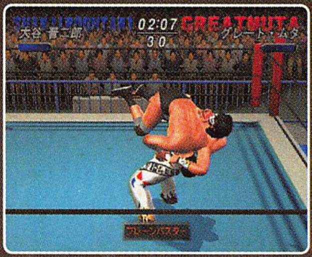


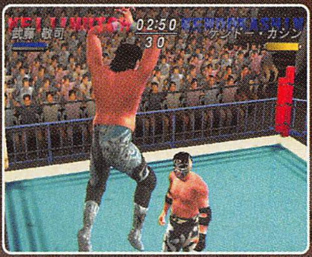






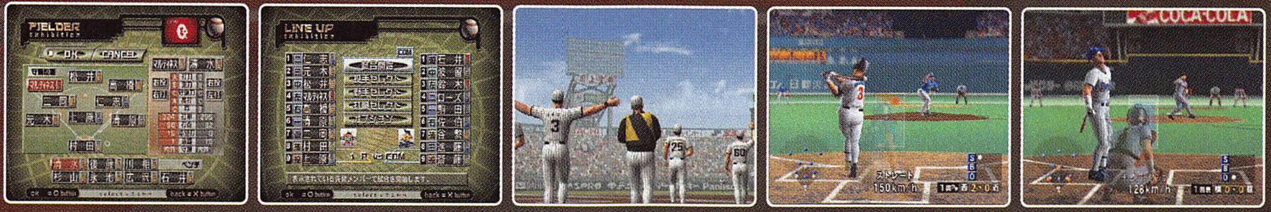






Gekikukan Pro Baseball (PlayStation 2)







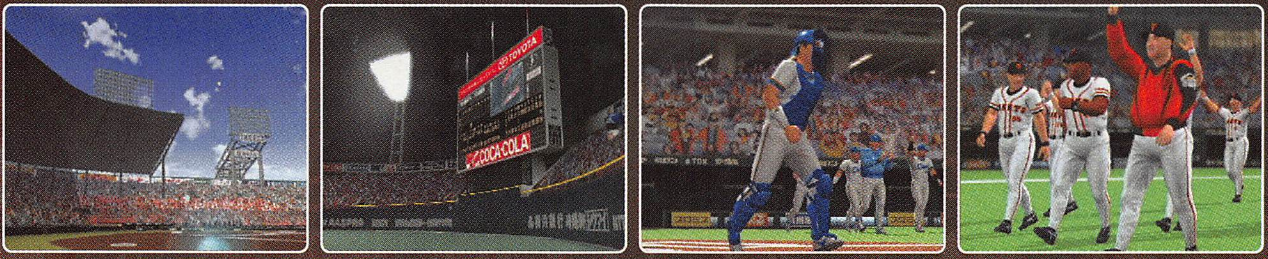


Yes, it is one of the best looking games I have ever seen. Yes, it too, probably won't come out over here (although I could totally see someone licensing the engine), but this is all pretty much moot if what I hear about the game is true. The sad truth is that this game reportedly blows. Some other mags have covered this game and said it 'plays like a baseball game should'. Well, these guys clearly hadn't played the game. Apparently this title lacks the all-important gameplay aspect. Few pitching options and lame control make this one an engine in dire need of a development team who knows something about the sport of baseball.









Mat Hoffman: Pro BMX (PlayStation)



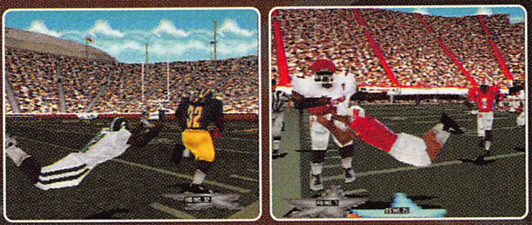
A free-style bike game that uses the *Tony Hawk Pro Skater* engine... need I say more? No, but I will. A game about a sport I have zero interest in may get more playtime than the next *Madden*.

MTV Sports: Skateboarding (PlayStation)

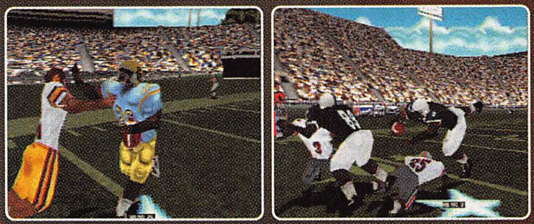


THQ and MTV are getting together to make another skateboarding title. This flavor of the month genre is lucky in that it is actually full of some pretty high quality title. I fear I may like something associated with MTV!

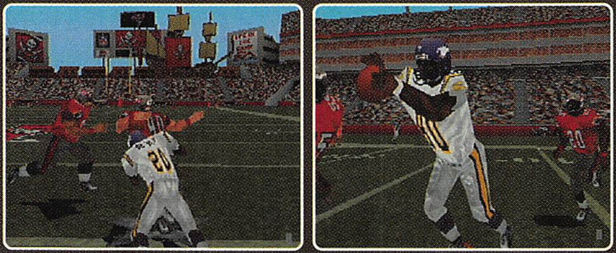
NCAA Football 2001 (PlayStation)



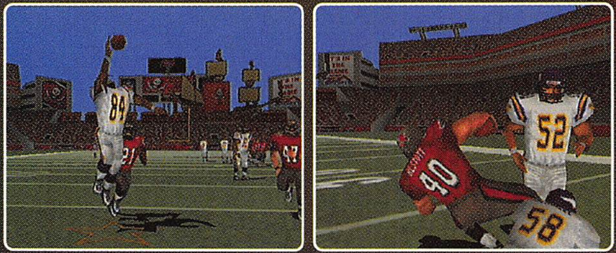
The best damn football franchise on the PlayStation is getting (hopefully) its last installment. A beefed up franchise mode and some great graphics and sound give this game the legs it needs to stay above the pack. I can only hope that EA has big plans for this franchise on the PS2. Although a 128-bit Boston College will probably still suck.

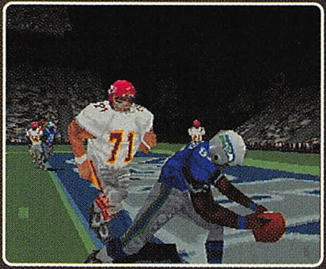


Madden 2001 (PlayStation)

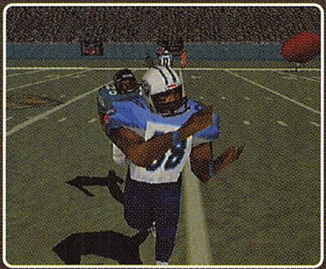


(Nintendo 64) Madden 2001

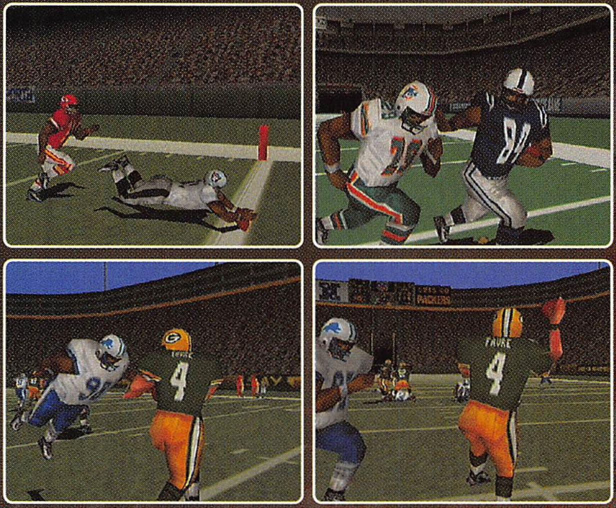




The biggest franchise in gaming history will release two of its best versions this upcoming football season. *Madden* had slumped there a bit, but impressed last year with a re-invigorated *Madden 2000.* It seems curious that America's most popular team sport is going into the new millenium with only a couple different titles, on each system (meanwhile the dreaded racing genre bloats like Rosie O'Donnell on a Big Mac binge). Expect *Madden* to control the lion's share of the market, though, even if it can't hang with the big boys on the PS2 and Dreamcast.

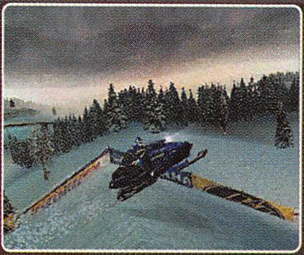




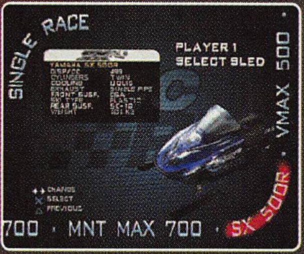


Snocross (PlayStation & Dreamcast)





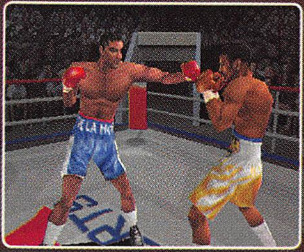
Last year one of my favorite games and most original titles on the PlayStation was *Sled Storm*, by EA. Taking the racing genre into an area very seldom travelled (it is called originality), *Snocross* looks to be a blazing title. It will be available on both PlayStation and Dreamcast.







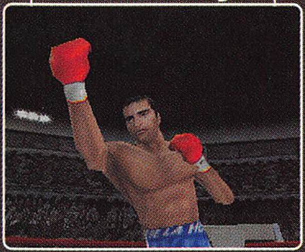

Knockout Kings 2001 (PlayStation)






A game that sold bundles despite playing like a busted violin, *KO Kings* is getting ready to release its third installment- and this one might actually contain some gameplay! Look at how great De La Hoya looks... bummer he ain't undefeated anymore.

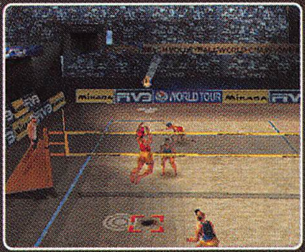
Old De La Hoya



New De La Hoya

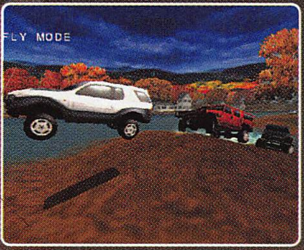
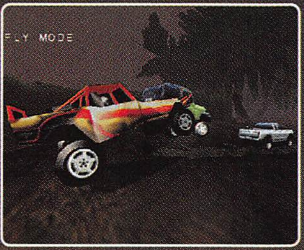


Volleyball (PlayStation)

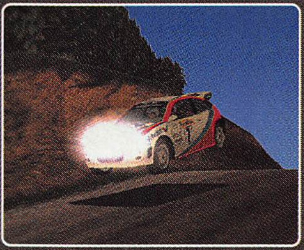
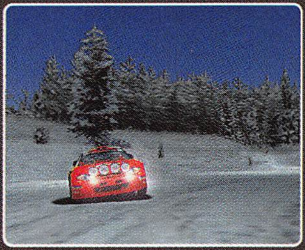
Other than *Super Spike*, there has never been a good volleyball title. Let's hope that Infogrames can pull it off because, quite frankly, the world really does need one...

Test Drive Off Road 3 (Dreamcast)

Next to F-1 games, I think off-road titles are the second most over developed. The *Test Drive* franchise needs a winner but the Dreamcast title doesn't look to be it.

Test Drive V-Rally 2 (Dreamcast)

While Test Drive Off Road 3 looks lackluster, *V-Rally 2*, on the other hand, looks hot. This may just give *Sega Rally* a run for its money, on the Dreamcast.

SCEE Year One PS2 game lineup

As the spring Tokyo Game Show proved, there's been a serious lack of information recently about upcoming high-profile Japanese PlayStation 2 titles (the exception is Konami, with two Hideo Kojima products—*ZOE* and *MGS 2*). Leave it to SCEE, then, to give the industry a serious shot in the arm with its PlayStation 2 software roster. The company revealed several first-generation PS2 games recently, and while the wholly predictable franchise updates are certainly in the pipeline, it's refreshing to see that there's a good amount of brand new games, if not completely original genres, coming as well. SCEI certainly has that angle covered with Fantavision... Anyway, all titles are still early in development, but both European and U.S. developers are benefiting greatly from the extra six months that they've had to tinker with the PS2 (their Japanese colleagues had to scramble with half-finished dev kits just to get their games ready for the system's initial launch).

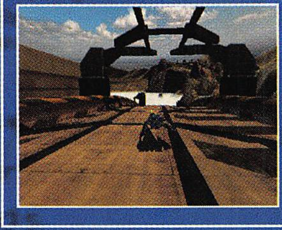
All of the following games are coined by SCEE as "year one" titles—in other words, several of them will launch close to the actual European hardware release, while others will be released later this year. Expect many of them to put in appearances at E3...

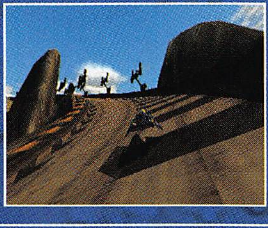
Wipeout Fusion

Undeterred by the relative commercial failure of *Wip3out*, Psygnosis Liverpool has been working on *Wipeout Fusion* since last fall, and while the early screen shots don't reveal it, subtle changes have been made to the gameplay. The game's hovercrafts have taken a page from Rollcage's book, and are now able to race on ceilings or at any angle the player chooses. Technically, things have improved dramatically. The crafts now feature forty-eight handling parameters, where previously, only seven parameters were included.





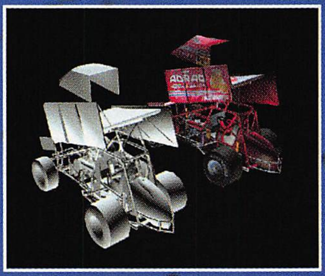




Spin: Sprint Car Racing

It's a widely known fact that respected Australian developer Ratbag (the team responsible for the acclaimed PC game *Powerslide*) has been working on exclusive PlayStation 2 games since last summer, and one of the titles in the works is *Spin: Sprint Car Racing*. The game's based (apparently) on one of the most popular motor sports in the U.S., and could translate to a next-generation video game rather well. Racing in this game will hit speeds in excess of 170 mph, with light vehicles that accelerate like nobody's business... so you know what that means—big and spectacular collisions! Take note, though, potential sprint racers: The cars will sustain a lot of damage in each race. You'll need to fix and upgrade your vehicle after every run.

SCEE and Ratbag are keeping additional information close to their collective chest, but considering the pedigree of the development team, this could be one title to look out for.



Drakan 2



Seattle-based Surreal Software's *Drakan 2* is a real surprise so far... In this sequel to last year's hit PC game, our heroine Rynn will find herself in the midst of another mystical adventure, this time with the help of the dragon Arokh. The original *Drakan* was an excellent mix of "Lord of the Rings"-style atmosphere, with dragons and sorcery the core of the game. SCEE's got the racing and sports genre covered, but this sophisticated adventure/action sequel from Surreal may turn many players' heads.

Surreal is promising massive environments (which the screen shots convey well) with many NPC characters and, interestingly, a non-linear plot. Emotion, the much talked-about factor by Sony, is something that the developers also hope to convey through complex facial animations and a number of real-time cut-scenes.



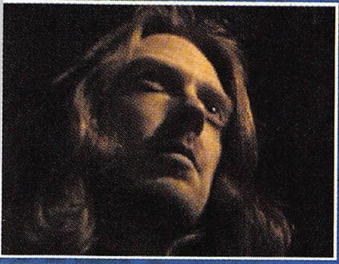


This Is Football 2

No console launch in Europe would be complete without a soccer title or two, and the PlayStation 2 is no exception. Konami's *ISS* is already a sure-fire hit (even if the playable versions have been extremely disappointing), but SCEE's follow-up to the PlayStation original *This is Football* is sure to give Konami a run for its money. Every aspect of the game is improved on the PS2. The player models have been beefed up to 3,000 polygons, and SCEE's adding a sophisticated facial animation system in which players actually wince while pulling off that "Klinsmann" move. Finally, *This Is Football 2* will feature a 'time warp' league of the greatest teams from the last fifty years that's sure to catch soccer-crazed European fans' interest.

Fur Fighters, Ecco The Dolphin, Black and White, Max Payne, N-Gen, Alone in the Dark IV—make no mistake, the year 2000 will see the release of many brilliant European games. This month, I'm excited to reveal Sony Computer Entertainment Europe's PlayStation 2 lineup...

An Interview with Jesper Kyd



Chances are you've spent a lot of time in Interplay's superlative sequel *MDK2* lately, and have wondered about those dark and moody beats in the background... Well, if you've never heard of Jesper Kyd before, he's the Danish-born composer behind the sound (not to mention that of *Messiah*). He's been hammering out memorable soundtracks since the Amiga era, and we recently had the opportunity to ask him a few questions.

GameFan: How much input did the development team have in your music? Did they let you come up with completely original tunes, or did they have a very specific style that they wanted??
Jesper Kyd: It differs from each job. *Messiah* and *Hitman* gave me very free reign to create the appropriate soundtrack, though we talked about how intense the music should be and so on.

GF: While you were recording tracks for *MDK2*, you were also finishing up *Messiah*. Was it difficult to maintain the specific sound of each game?
JK: In a perfect world, it's more comfortable to work on one project at a time, but you never know when a new project comes along. In this case, though, I had just finished the seven *Messiah* tracks when music production started on *MDK2*.

GF: Did you work with Fear Factory to produce the music for *Messiah*?
JK: No, the three Fear Factory remixes were done independently from the band, but they had to approve the mixes in order for the tracks to make it into the game.

GF: The *MDK2* soundtrack was a team effort, wasn't it?
JK: I collaborated with Hollywood composer Albert Olsen (who) recently finished working with Danny Elfman on Tim Burton's "Sleepy Hollow." Working with Albert was a lot of fun. We are two completely different composers, and it was great mixing our two styles together and seeing the music evolving into a completely different style.

GF: How long did it take to compose the tracks for the games?
JK: It differs from each track. A track can take anywhere from two days to two weeks.

GF: What sort of hardware do you use to create music?
JK: I use Cubase VST for sequencing and hard disc recording, and record everything on my Mac. Here's a synth list: Roland JP8080, Roland MC505, Roland JD990, Roland Juno 60, Roland JX8p, Roland TB-303 + 606 + 707 + R8, Yamaha VL1, Yamaha FS1R, Akai S2800, Emulator E6400 Ultra, Ensoniq TS12, Marion MSR2, Casio CZ1, Korg DW8000, Oberheim Matrix 6, Oberheim OBXa + effects machines such as Sherman Filterbank, Electrix Filterfactory, Lexicon MPX500, Alesis Quadraverb + mixer, compressor, midi boxes, soft synths, synth editors and so on.

GF: A lot of bands are getting into producing exclusive music for video games. Do you think this could spell trouble for pro video game musicians?
JK: I don't foresee too much trouble if you can compete with these bands as far as music quality goes. Games are like movies—they benefit from bands doing a track for a certain part of the game, but games still need a complete score. In a few cases, such as *Wipeout* and *Rollcage*, games benefit from not having a score and only use tracks from dance artists, and we will probably see more of these things happen for sports and racing games—though it seems strange to me that gamers and producers are excited about using tracks from bands that are not specifically created for the game.

GF: You have your own band. Can you tell us a bit about its history, and what type of music you guys play?
JK: DECIBEL has been creating music for around a year now. My partner (Jun Mizumachi) is a well-known sound designer here in the NYC post-production scene, where he creates sounds for commercials and films. DECIBEL creates experimental beats, mostly in the breakbeat genre, but we mix our music with ambient music and deeply atmospheric sounds. We are currently working on an ambient soundtrack for a sci-fi game based on a movie. We have been playing in NYC clubs for almost a year now, and it's a lot of fun getting out of the studio and recreating the music on stage.

GF: *Hitman* is another game you're writing music for. Can you give us some details on the game and what kind of music you're producing for it? Will it be more movie score-oriented, perhaps?
JK: *Hitman* is what Eidos calls a 'thinking man's shooter.' You don't just shoot everything, so the music needs to be more stealthy, exploring-type stuff. The music in *Hitman* is film-type music. The format is direct music, so everything will be timed to different locations. Also, when you're sneaking around doing your actual hit, the music changes, and when you're attacked, the music gets more intense, and so on.

The Getaway

The Getaway, an original title heavily inspired by *Driver* and Bizarre Creations' *Metropolis*, features a professional bank robber named Mark who is going through a bit of an identity crisis. Meanwhile, notorious mobster Charlie Jolson has kidnapped his son, and Mark must find a way to get him back. Forget the naff plot, though—what you really need to know is that *The Getaway* features over seventy square kilometers of realistically modeled London streets. Kensington Palace and the Tower of London both appear, as do over fifty real-life, driveable cars.



The screen shots of this game look spectacular, but based on the character models, I'd say that these are conceptual shots and not actual in-game photos. However, sources close to the Soho-based development team that have seen the game in motion claim that the texture detail is just as spectacular as these shots display.

Dropship

The game most early in development of this set of titles is Studio Camden's (creator of *Blast Radius* and the forthcoming *Team Buddies*) *Dropship*, which combines hints of real-time strategy with good old-fashioned blasting. Players assume the role of a rookie pilot to fly several different, heavily armed dropships through various military operations. The distinctly bare-looking *Dropship* will hopefully offer a less arcade-style experience and give the RTS fans out there something to shout about...



F1 2000

Another game in development at Psygnosis' Liverpool Studios is *F1 2000*, which is set for release on both the PS and PS2 this fall. The popularity of F1 racing is at an all-time high in Europe, and this is a key launch title. Psygnosis promises unparalleled authenticity, with hyper-detailed tracks and spatial stereo sound. A brand-new replay system will allow players to choose their own camera angles, and race sequences can be stored on the memory card for later review.



Evo Rally

A heated battle between two 128-bit rally games will inevitably erupt later this year when *Evo Rally* ships for the PlayStation 2 and *Colin McRae 2* arrives on the Dreamcast. Martin Kenwright and Ian Hetherington's Evolution Studios have signed a publishing deal with SCEE, and the first game from them is (rather surprisingly, it must be said) *Evo Rally*. The game features a feast of rally action on forty-eight extremely detailed stages, so there's little doubt that, if halfway decent, it'll be a major hit in Europe.

Rumors...

E3's just around the corner, and publishers and developers alike have fallen silent on new games in production. A few interesting projects have come to light, though, including a sequel to Virgin's excellent DNA-'em-up *Evolva* for PlayStation 2 and PC (the original game's also hotly tipped for the PlayStation 2). Another game that's now slated for release in the first quarter of 2001 is Confounding Factor's much-anticipated *Galleon*, which is heading for the PC (and, most likely, for the PlayStation 2 as well).

Japan Now!



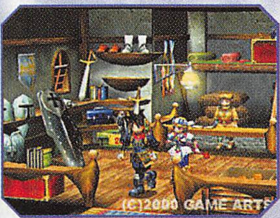




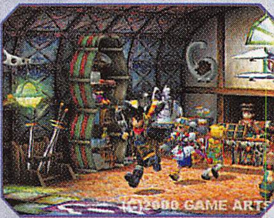












Japan Now is brought to you by **Kodomo**

Grandia II

(Dreamcast)







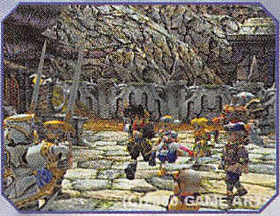


At the Spring TGS in April, there was only *one* video tape to get: Grandia II. The DC RPG more than held its own against Sega's best (none other than *Eternal Arcadia* and *Phantasy Star Online*) and is set to give all sub-par developers a lesson in how to do a DC RPG right. You'll get to take on the role of Rudo, who, with his pet eagle Sky, teams up with a host of other characters to explore a massive rift in the planet. Fans of the original will be happy to know that there will be some carry over from the first, in the guise of familiar battle and thematic presentation. Gone are the days of simple sprite-based characters and their polygonal descendants look certain to do the series justice when GameArts finally releases it sometime this year.









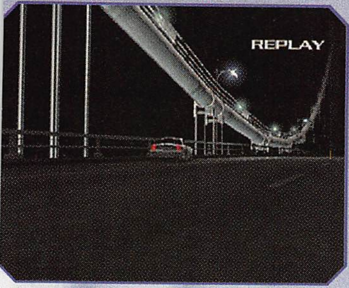


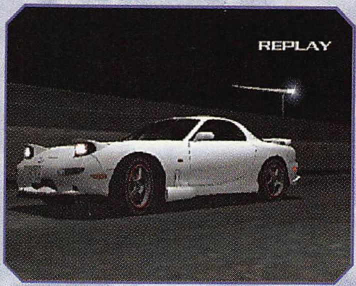













Shutoku Battle 2

Genki is currently putting the finishing touches on the second incarnation of *Shutoku Battle* (known here as *Tokyo Extreme Racer*), and will likely have the game finished before GT2000 ships for the PS2. While the first game certainly looked good, a few level design issues prevented it from becoming a 'must have,' rather than a 'should rent.' Well, Genki has listened to gamers' complaints and has said that track, rivals and cars will all get, at the minimum, doubled. The game hits Japan on June 27th, and you can expect it to get picked up for a Domestic release this fall.

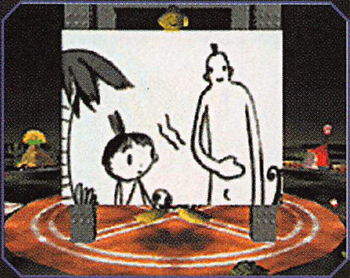


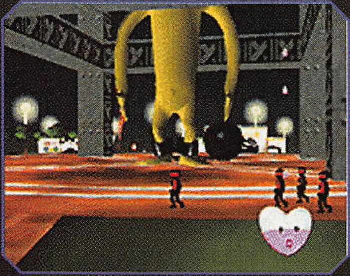
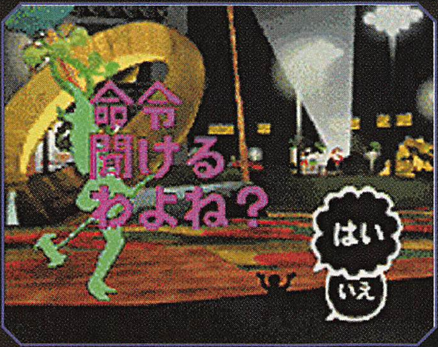


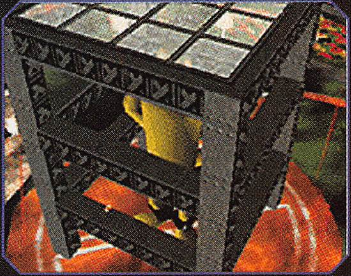
Doshin




If you're one of the few fortunate enough to have an import 64DD (nevermind being crazy enough to actually find one, and plunk down 400-500 bones for it), you've probably given *Doshin the Giant* a test run. The Param/Marigul developed game (reviewed by Fury just last issue) is already getting a sequel of sorts in the form of *Kyojin no Doshin: Kaihou Sensen Chibikko Chikko Daishuugou*. All that you need know now is that the game will require the original *Doshin* to play and will fall somewhere into the gap between the 'shooter' and 'sim' genres, while still retaining the charm of the original (meaning God knows what kind of god you are). Let's see, an ultra-rare Nintendo shooting game that features *Doshin* for the 64DD... Why do I get the feeling that ECM will soon be pulling his freshly-pressed God Complex out of the closet?



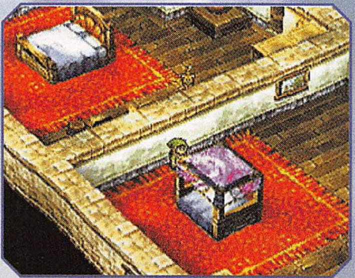





Dragon Quest VII

With a Japanese release of May 18th, Enix's *Dragon Quest VII*, might just be the last, great PS game. The following for this game is immense in Japan, where the wait to play at the TGS went well over 90 minutes (and trust me, there were a ton of gamers willing to put the time in). Expect this one to give *FFIX* a run for its money during the summer.







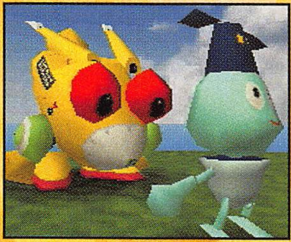

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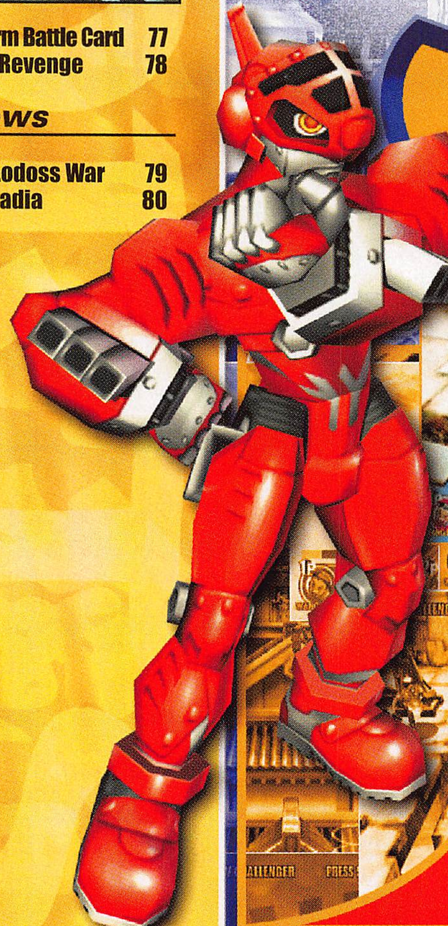
Power Stone 2



When I heard late Monday night that *Power Stone 2* had landed at my local import shop, I was prepared to break world land speed records so I could get a few hours of play in before my healthy 3:00 a.m. bedtime. Yet that night, after an exhausting play test, I hit the sack around 1:00 a.m., which is definitely not a good sign for a bona fide *Power Stone* freak like myself. I couldn't understand it—the original *Power Stone* is my favorite Dreamcast fighter to date, and I was nearly certain that the sequel (and a Capcom sequel, at that) would demolish its predecessor (similar to the beating that ECM gave Dango at last year's E3 *Power Stone* tourney... hmm, it seems someone should've stayed with Gunrock instead of switching horses mid-race—learn the lesson, Kid Fan). But try as I might, something was not right, no matter how many times I went back to the game. Something was very much un-*Power Stone*...











The 2000 Tokyo Game Show came and went, and oddly enough, there were practically no stories about the game. Sure, there were plenty of little tidbits about its new features and the fact that it was playable at the show, but no one seemed to mention the fact that it was virtually a whole new game. But what type of game was it? Eventually, we would all find out—though it's still rather surprising that almost no one mentioned it till now.

Given Nintendo's remarkable success with *Mario Party* and *Smash Bros.*, it's not surprising that Capcom would attempt to create a title more suitable to multiple players. Why it chose to meddle with my beloved *Power Stone* is beyond me, but at the end of the day, if it's gonna drive sales, who am I to argue? I just wish Capcom had mucked with *Final Fight Revenge* instead. I highly doubt that anyone but ECM would've missed it <snicker>.






Anyway, even before I sat down with the game, I knew a few things about it. I knew that the camera had to be pulled back to accommodate up to four fighters (it was completely obvious in nearly all of the screen shots). And indeed, at times, it is pulled back—way, WAY back. One thing that I loved about the original *Power Stone*, though, was how close the camera was to the characters. Each fight had a very intimate feel. It actually felt like "playing an anime." *PS2* not only features a more remote camera, but also one that painfully lacks intelligence... At times, the camera view will be so distorted that you'll wonder how something so significant escaped Capcom's testers. Meanwhile, in other instances, the battles (now heated matches for as many as four players) are simply too chaotic to discern what's going on. Believe me, in a hail of bullets, explosions and blistering super moves (and yes, they're every bit as spectacular as *PS1*'s), identifying a character's whereabouts ain't exactly a perfect science.

Man vs. man—vs. stage?!? Yeah, you heard that right, *PS2* includes five all-new levels that boast as much interaction as your local Chuck E. Cheese pizza parlor. Some stages start out in fixed locations, but then a few punches are thrown, and players suddenly find themselves in a mad dash to avoid impending danger (e.g., gigantic, rolling boulders, raging firestorms or, literally, falling stages...



not exactly typical fighting game fare). One level in particular begins atop an enormous airship, where players customarily duke it out. At first, those that fall off the stage are automatically 'beamed' back aboard the craft (à la "Star Trek"); moments later, though, the ship begins to rotate, and all players find themselves careening toward Earth. Then, in the midst of this free fall, a number of oaken chests containing parasols magically appear. There are only enough for a few fighters, however—for the rest, it's a loooong way down. Truthfully, the only disadvantage to these new stages (other than the fact that they're not fixed) is that there are only five of them. But then, just like *PS1*, there are plenty of extras to unlock (there is an item shop, after all)... new stages, perhaps. Oh, and did I mention that Pride, Fokker's father and Mel, the shop-keeper are playable characters?

Ah, yes, now we get to my favorite part of the game—new characters and weapons. As the game begins, the opening credits roll and the awesome character design's attributed to Akimon, one of Capcom's most renowned artists (the great Bengus is apparently MIA). And, as expected, the four new fighters—Pete, a preppy little schoolboy with a robotic edge; Accel, who wishes he were Billy the Kid; Gourmand, a comical chef wielding a vicious frying pan; and Julia, a Princess Toadstool wannabe—fit the eccentric bill perfectly. But without a suitable arsenal at their disposal, where would these *Power Stone* combatants be? Skateboards, bubble guns, mega phones, battle-axes and ice wands are just a few of the new tortuous items available. *PS2*'s most original addition, though, has got to be the ability to mix and match weapons in the item shop. Fancy combining a skateboard and a Gatling gun. The end result might not be what you expected.

I'll be the first to admit that what I expected from *PS2* and what I got late Monday night were two totally different things... The game features several different play modes (one-on-one, arcade, original and adventure) and literally a ton of interesting goodies to unlock, but the overall package is still a far cry from the original *Power Stone*. True fans can hold tight to their *PS1* discs or put their controllers down, go outside and make some new friends (imagine that!). Me, I'm all about a generous dose of social anxiety. My money's on *Power Stone 1*.



Fury would have enjoyed Powerstone 2 *more... but that requires friends that can't be bought for rides to McDonalds.*






VIEWPOINT SCORE :86	DEVELOPER - CAPCOM	1-4 PLAYERS	FURY: CALL IT *SUPER POWER STONE SMASH BROS.*
	PUBLISHER - CAPCOM	AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN	

REVIEW





Samba! Samba!

Check your ego at the door—*Samba de Amigo* is not for the stiff, the self-conscious or the jaded. And no, you don't have to be drunk to appreciate it. All you need is an open mind... and $150 to play this latest import. Hey, wait, where are you going? Sure, it costs a pretty penny to get your *Samba* on, but this game warrants your attention, and more importantly, Sega of America's attention. It's one of the most innovative titles in quite a while, it's got catchy music, and Sega's finest—Yuji Naka and Sonic Team, the group that brought you *Sonic the Hedgehog*—are developing it! Its character design is as cute as its music is catchy. There's Bingo and Bongo the drumming bears, Samba the maraca shakin' monkey, Chumba and Wamba the backup leopards and plenty more!





Legacy de Samba

A couple of months ago, as I made my way back from Japan, I couldn't stop talking about this game (ECM's note: Hmmm, anybody else read the *Typing of the Dead* review?). Indeed, ever since I picked up those ill-fated maracas in an obscure Japanese arcade, I've been a changed man—er, ninja. Before befriending *Amigo*, I was never into Konami's *Bemani* arcade games... *Beatmania, Guitar Freaks, Dance Dance Revolution DX Super X-treme Append Gotta Mix Get!*—none of those games ever held my attention for more than five minutes (except the "Big Beat Mix - *Metal Gear Solid*" in *Beatmania 2nd Arcade Mix*, which was kind of cool). Yet despite my aversion to arcade music games, I got hooked on Sega's *Samba de Amigo,* and I kept coming back for more. In every arcade I visited in Japan (and trust me, there were a lot of them), I felt compelled to shake my ninja bootie onstage to the delight of gawking spectators. *Samba de Amigo* is **the** music game with the potential to capture Joe Blow's attention and make rhythm games popular in the U.S. It's catchy, easy to pick up and more fun than you should be allowed to have with your clothes on.

Shake...Your Booty



The idea is simple: Grab the maraca controllers, hold them at the correct height (there are three height settings—low, medium, and high) and shake 'em when prompted. From time to time, you'll also be required to strike a pose for a couple of seconds. The movements are beautifully choreographed to the music, so it looks like you're an actual member of the band and not some overweight sausage trying to make Ritchie Valens sweat. Speakin' of sweat—arcade games like *Dance Dance Revolution* and *Punch Mania* can be quite a physical workout, but *Samba de Amigo* doesn't require that much physical effort, so you needn't worry about ruining your work clothes if you want to shake up your lunch break... though the wrists can get a little sore. The graphics vary from amazingly colorful to psychedelic, and, like *UmJammer Lammy*, the better you do, the crazier things get in the background... though it's hard to pay attention to the on-screen eye candy when you're focusing on your shake.



R REVIEW	EGGO: You've got a friend in me	Developer - Sonic Team	1-2 Players	Viewpoint Score: 94
		Publisher - Sega	Available Now Japan	

Select... Your Music

Unlike those *Bemani* games, *Samba* has music you can recognize. Most of the songs in the game are popular mainstream music tunes: "La Bamba," "Tubthumping," "Macarena," "Soul Bossa Nova" (from the "Austin Powers" movies), "Take on Me" and more. It may not be licensed (i.e., that's not A-ha doing "Take On Me..."), but at least you know the words. Unfortunately (?), the Ricky Martin songs "Livin' La Vida Loca" and "Cup of Life," which were in the arcade version, didn't make it into the DC version. Getting tired of "Tubthumping" after getting "knocked down... but I get up again" for the millionth time? DC owners can also download new songs from Sega's web-site (bonus!). Shake to the beat of new songs from *Sonic CD*, *Rent a Hero* and *Afterburner*, to name a few. Talk about replay value...



Save Up... Your Money

I already mentioned that it'll cost at least $150 to buy this game, but realistically, it could easily cost over $200... The DC version features many console-exclusive mini-games that play up the multi-player aspect, so to fully appreciate *Samba de Amigo*, you may want to buy two sets of maraca controllers (these retail for about $80) in addition to the import game (which costs around $60). The extra maracas can be used in the two-player arcade mode, or players can dabble with the mini-games. One mini-game is like a "versus" mode, another is like a little "Simon Says" game, and yet another lets gamers practice their posing skills. They're gimmicks, for the most part, and players will spend most of their time in the arcade mode, but it's nice to have some extras in the console version.











Amigos Crossing the Border?

With that extravagant import price tag (if you play this game without the maracas, you're getting about a third of the real game), you must be wondering if *Samba's* coming to the U.S. anytime soon. Well, rumor has it, Sega will have this game at its booth at E3. If Sega takes the time to add more popular American songs to the mix (or to make them available for download), *Samba de Amigo* could be a surprising hit in the U.S. Hopefully, we'll have good news to report next issue from E3.

Eggo is livin' la vida loca for spending $150 on a dancing monkey wearing a sombrero.



The Typing of the Dead

Excerpts from Eggo's daily journal:

Day 3: Went to an arcade in Japan... played Sega's *The Typing of the Dead*. I'd been interested in this game ever since hearing about the concept (*House of the Dead 2* with words attached to the monsters; type the appropriate letters to blast the zombies, and send them flying in a sea of their own green goo). And after considerable play, I can say that the game's definitely great. A crowd of at least ten people stood and watched as I showed off my uncanny typing skills. I burned through the first two levels without dying... then, on the third level, the yen symbol (¥) came up, and I lost two men trying to hunt down the right key. That symbol's not standard issue on an American keyboard! Needless to say, the crowd dispersed shortly thereafter, muttering something about a "baka" and a "gaijin." Still, I had a lot of fun, and I can't wait to tell the guys all about it...





Day 8: The guys at the office just don't get it. I try to get them excited about *The Typing of the Dead*, but it looks like I'm going to have to shove it in front of their faces before they give it a chance...





Day 10: Trying to get ahold of this import game for the Dreamcast is turning out to be a colossal pain. Most stores have never heard of it, and those that have say they aren't getting it. What's wrong with people?

Day 11: Finally got *The Typing of the Dead* today, and the Dreamcast version has even more features than the arcade game! There are typing drills to hone skills in all categories: speed, accuracy, special keys (non-letter symbols) and reflexes. There's also a boss mode and a Dreamcast mode in addition to the arcade game. With my VMU to record stats, the replay value's exceptional. Oh, and every time a player finishes a level, his/her performance is ranked for comparison against other players' performances.





R REVIEW	EGGO: TYPE OR DIE!	DEVELOPER - SEGA	1-2 PLAYERS	VIEWPOINT SCORE: 92
		PUBLISHER - SEGA	AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN	

Day 13: Brought *The Typing of the Dead* into work today... they weren't impressed. I tried to tell them, "Look! The words are randomly generated, so there's no memorization required... it's all pure typing prowess!" They wouldn't have any of that, though... Most of them just walked away, saying, "I'm not a fast typist. I can't play that game." "But you can change difficulty settings to make it easier," I told them. No one budged, though. They didn't even want to try it. Oh, well... I guess it'll just be Dangohead and I (he played the arcade game at ASI last year and liked it)...





Day 15: Caught ECM furtively eyeing *TTotD* today when people weren't looking. I dare not hope...

Day 16: Saw ECM playing the game today with a big smile on his face—and people were actually stopping to watch! I don't mean to sound so surprised, mind you... The game's not shabby, visually, even in today's eye candy-laden world of video games. In fact, it looks exactly like *House of the Dead 2*. You'd think a first-generation game would look dated, but the textures are quite clean and varied... I doubt that the PS2 could run a game like this.







Day 17: The spectators have become players. Even bad typists like Fury and Waka are stepping up to the plate at the lower difficulty levels. I suspect that they're tempted to buy the game just to improve their typing skills...

Day 18: Played *The Typing of the Dead* together with ECM for the first time. It's an interesting mix of versus and co-operative play, because players must frantically try to steal each other's kills while covering each other's backs at the same time. ECM's a faster typist, but I'm more accurate, so we make a pretty good sausage team (sitting there hunched over the keyboard): he takes care of the quick reflex shots, and I'm the closer.

Day 20: People are starting to pair up with players of the same proficiency... After all, playing this game with someone out of your league just isn't any fun; either they're too good and they steal all the kills, or they don't get any because you're too fast. I'm happy that everyone's finally giving the game a chance and actually enjoying it. After all, it's not just *House of the Dead 2* with a keyboard. Player characters feature battery-powered Dreamcasts on their backs and keyboards in front, which are used to shoot monsters. Even the enemies come armed with different weapons, which tend to be comical—such as the evil toilet plunger.

Day 21: ECM's now desperately trying to find a copy of this game, but it's not easy to track down. Most import shops didn't think people would care, so they didn't bother stocking it. Luckily, Sega plans to bring the game to the States. I actually prefer playing the Japanese version, however, because it really forces gamers to react on the fly. If the words are in English, it's easy to breeze through the game. In Japanese, though, it's purely a matter of reflex.

Day 25: The situation's degrading... ECM's looking more and more haggard every day. He spends his late nights playing *TTotD,* and is becoming more paranoid (yes, hard to believe, I know) with every passing minute. Every day, his typing is becoming more frantic and chaotic, like his life somehow depended on it. I wish I had a tape of him pounding out that URL in record time...

Day 29: I begin to worry. ECM has locked himself in his office, and won't pick up the phone. All I hear are cries of "Damn '¥'! Why does it have to be a '¥' again?" He is obviously losing sleep. I myself feel this uncontrollable urge to strap on a DC keyboard, storm into his office and blow him away with a lightning-quick "supercalifragilisticexpialidocious..."

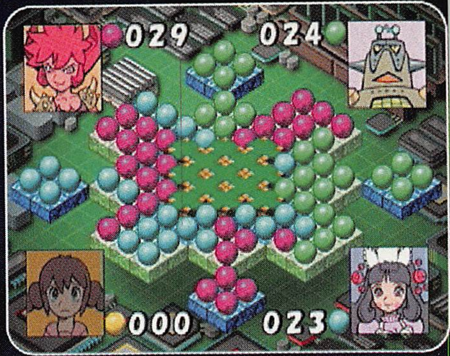
Eggo knew his uncanny typing skills would someday save his life.

Something as estrogen-powered as *Hello Kitty* is normally enough to send any self-respecting male (other than Shidoshi) running for the exit. The cutesy Sanrio creation has endeared the fairer sex for generations, and has been the bane of my existence since I was six years old (I'm still haunted by all the *Hello Kitty* pencil holders and binders that surrounded me in homeroom). The only place I could hide from the evils of this phenomenon was on my console, one of the last bastions of testosterone-fueled entertainment. Well, that bastion's finally been toppled—*Hello Kitty Lovely Fruitpark* has been released on the Dreamcast, and now, no one is safe. What's worse is that the gameplay's fantastic...

No worries, though. To show males the world over that they, too, can enjoy this game, Midnight Synergy's taken *Kitty*'s addictive gameplay and dressed it up with art that won't emasculate you like driving a Del Sol will. They even gave it a name that appeals to the male's favorite pastime: conquest.

So what is *Get Colonies*, exactly? Well, does anyone remember the Atari coin-op *Attaxx?* Probably not... Not only is the game ten years old, but it was also a colossal flop. I was even told (after I complained about its removal from my local arcade) that I was the only one that ever played it at my location. It was too bad, too, because *Attaxx* was a great strategy game.

Anyway, *Get Colonies*' rules are simple: Whoever has the most colored balls on the board at the end of the round wins that round. Players increase their numbers by placing their balls right next to each other or by converting opponents' balls. To do this, all you need do is place one of your balls in the vicinity of an opponent's. Every ball on an adjacent square is instantly turned into one of yours.





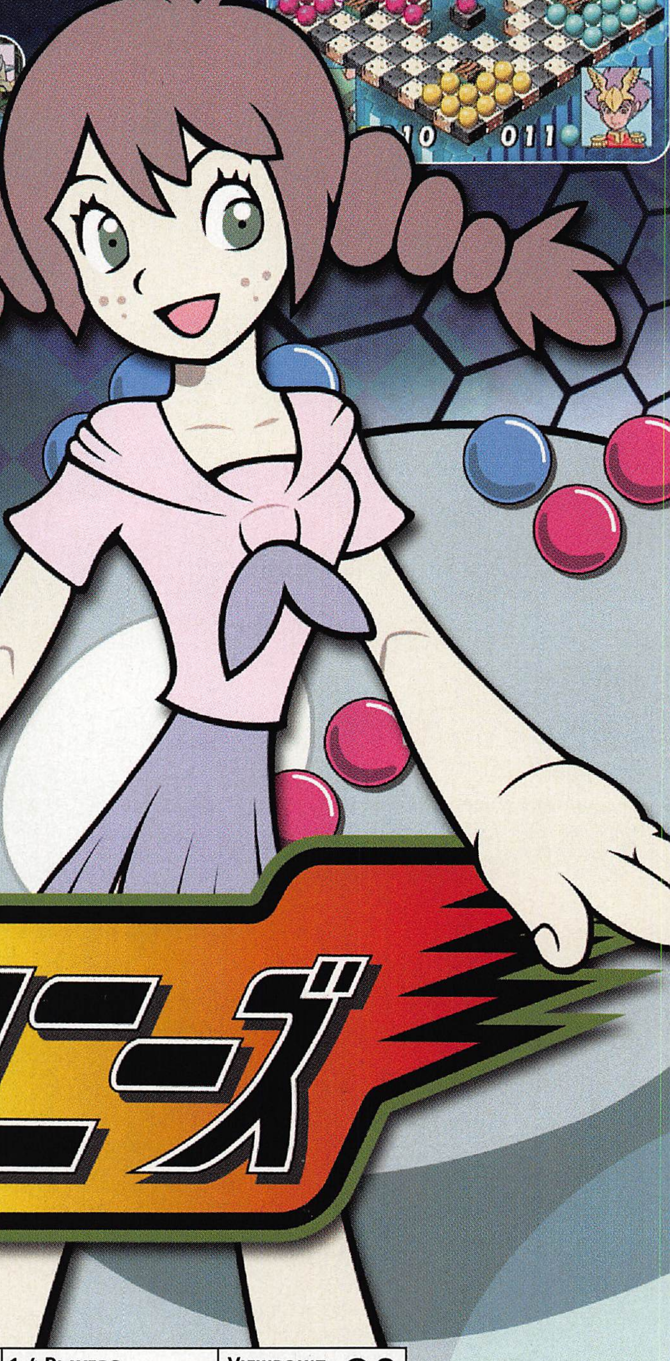












It sounds simplistic, but in fact is far from it—namely because your opponent is doing the same thing to your balls as you are to his. The key to victory, surprisingly enough, is in minimizing the amount of surface area you control. The fewer balls an opponent can come into contact with, the better. Each board also adds its own elements into the mix; walls, empty spaces and different-shaped borders come into play, and every change to the basic layout of the board adds a different obstacle to work around and another wrinkle to the gameplay strategy.

Get Colonies is already beginning to take over the office: Everyone here (other than Fury, who apparently cannot grasp the concept) is constantly engaged in fierce competition. Ahhhhh, testosterone is allowed to flow once again... ❙

GET!!コロニーズ

REVIEW	THE JUDGE: YOU MOVE YOUR BALLS USING YOUR HANDS...	DEVELOPER - MIDNIGHT SYNERGY PUBLISHER - SEGA JAPAN	1-4 PLAYERS AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN	VIEWPOINT SCORE: 90



UMIHARAKAWASE • SHUN

~second edition~

Kodomo scoffed, but I knew better... Beneath *Umiharakawase Shun*'s (pronounced 'diff-i-cult') dated surface lay a title bustling with awesome play mechanics. Still, he looked perplexed, asking "Why in the world I would waste my time on a game with 16-bit graphics?" Nearly every member of the GameFan staff walked by my desk and heckled me for backing Xing's latest, but I just laughed (to myself, of course—confrontation is, after all, an evil, evil thing). Shaking my head, I recalled a similar incident with The Neverhood's *Skullmonkeys* (funny how *Skullmonkeys* become everyone's hardcore poster child overnight—of course that was ECM's baby, but I digress)...

Umiharakawase (US from this point) was initially released on the Super Famicom, and was one of the more obscure platformers of its day. It featured a cute little anime girl (complete with generic oversized eye sockets) by the same name as the game. Her goal was simply to make it to a small wooden door hidden somewhere in each level, or "field," as they're called in the game. Sounds easy, huh? If only it were...

Each of *US*'s fields are comprised of a series of red, yellow and blue blocks. Ladders adjoin some of the blocks, but many of them are only accessible by latching onto them with Umi's fishing line. Of course, this is no ordinary fishing line—it's on par with *Bionic Commando*'s grappling device (and *Worms'* ninja rope), and creates the game's addictive "hook." Scattered about the levels are all sorts of slow-moving mutant fish (legs, for god's sake, they have legs... what has science wrought this time?!) injected with state-of-the-art AI—they move from right to left and left to right. As players attempt to defy the laws of physics and traverse the levels with a mere fishing rod, then, these annoying amphibians inevitably cause massive amounts of frustration. "O.K., I've got to make it to that platform by leaping blindly off this block and somehow latching onto that... stupid hermit crab, where did he come from?"

Visually, *US*'s 2.5D graphics might leave plenty to be desired, but the true innovation stems from the unusual play mechanics. You see, after mastering the basic principles of Umi's fishing line, you might get the nerve to take some chances and maneuver to doors that seem impossible to negotiate. This is exactly why the game's so awesome, though: Inching along the sides of walls and taking the proverbial "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade"-style leap of faith is commonplace in *US*. Be aware, though—there are no continues or saves, and hence, risks carry hefty price tags. A real man, though, one that sneers at the idea of continuing, will quickly go into self-preservation mode—after all, with only eight lives at one's disposal, the game can become ruthlessly unforgiving.

It's hard to weed through all the import games that surface each month... Every once in a while, though, a title manages to arise without any hype or fanfare that delivers amazing gameplay and (can't seem to help myself here) soothing 2.5D visuals. If you can land a copy of this rare platformer, definitely let me know—I'm still borrowing ECM's copy!

Fury would like to thank Reubus for teaching him the way of the rod. (Reub's note: Not sure I like the sound of that...)



VIEWPOINT SCORE :85	DEVELOPER - JCB/JACKPOT	1 PLAYER	FURY: *BIONIC UMIHARAKAWASE?*
	PUBLISHER - XING	AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN	

REVIEW








When I spoke with the friendly folks at Atlus of Japan, one of the first things they said about *Primal Image Vol. 1* was that it "wasn't really a game." Honestly, I couldn't have put it any better... What we've got here is a PS2 title that's one part *Pokémon Snap* and one part Barbie, with a boatload of goofy nerd appeal thrown in to seal the deal.

The game features three play modes: Memory, Produce and Album modes. Memory mode is incredibly simple: A movie sequence will play, showing a model (male or female) walking around as if on a fashion runway (yes, there's a male model in there for the ladies). 'Players' then click the button to snap a glamorous Polaroid of the subject from a flattering angle (if you're a master *Pokémon Snap*per, this'll be a cinch). Then, once the shoot's over, the game critiques the player's photographic efforts, and his/her career as a professional photographer begins. Score highly with some impressive snapshots, and you'll earn mighty points, which can be applied to the Produce mode.

This is really where the pseudo-fun begins! In the Produce mode, *Primal Image* harnesses the raw power of the mighty PS2 and generates <drum roll, please—cue stage music>... a model! That's right, Bob, we're giving players the chance to view a polygonal human being (male or female) from any possible angle: Rotate it, zoom in, scrutinize every luscious detail! But that's not all... We'll also throw in... the ability to pose this imaginary person <applause>! Using the mighty hand tool, grab this imaginary human and spin her around! Bend her arm behind her back, twist her head around like Linda Blair or lean her up against <dramatic pause>... a new prop! Score highly in Memory mode and you'll be awarded new furniture to make the set of your dreams: bar stools, pool chairs or microphones... The world is truly your oyster!

Yes, simply set up the shoot, pose the model just right, in the appropriate costume (oh yes, if *Dead or Alive 2* offers it, so can we!), with all the props you want, and it's time to... crazy picture get! Snap away with that camera, recording for posterity the moments you'd never want your grandkids to see... then save those images to the memory card for future viewing in Album mode.

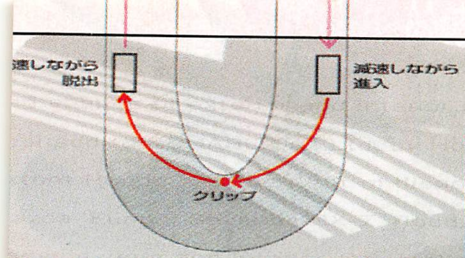
In a nutshell, that's what *Primal Image Vol. 1* (yes, future volumes to come... ick!) consists of. I always applaud originality, which *Primal Image* has in spades—however, the whole premise of this 'game' is shaky to begin with. What's worse is that the Memory Mode rewards repetition, not skill. The more times you retry the photo shoot, the more points are added to your total. There's no penalty for retries, so if you keep snapping, the points keep accumulating. The lack of skill and the limited number of characters (only four from the start) is sorely disappointing. Shy away, curious adventurer; stick to *Pokémon Snap* or—god forbid—a dating sim... even an FMV game like *0 Story* is preferable. Now I feel all dirty for saying that...

Eggo would rather spend $80 on his girlfriend then ask her to pose for pictures, because then he won't have to deal with jaggies and loading time.





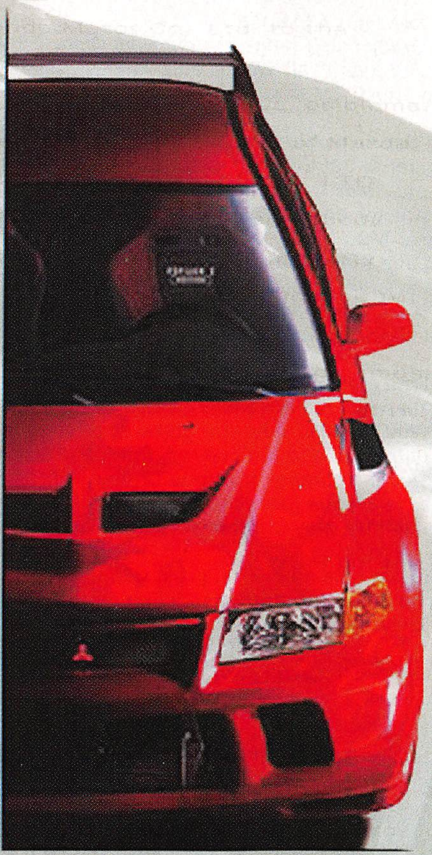
REVIEW — EGGO: Do grown men play with dolls... other than ECM?	Developer - Atlus	1 Player	Viewpoint Score: 67
	Publisher - Atlus	Available Now Japan	



■スローイン・ファーストアウトの例■







■ レース中の操作 ■

DRIVING EMOTION TYPE-S™

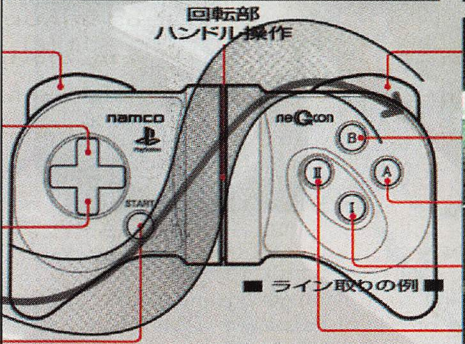
For once (much to the delight of Fury), I find myself at a loss for words... There's a cardinal rule in game development that says, "Stick with what you know best and don't branch out into other genres to make some quick cash." Yet Square, the maker of many an epic game, broke that rule with *Driving Emotion Type-S,* and the results are less than stunning... They actually make Square's own *Racing Lagoon* look good.

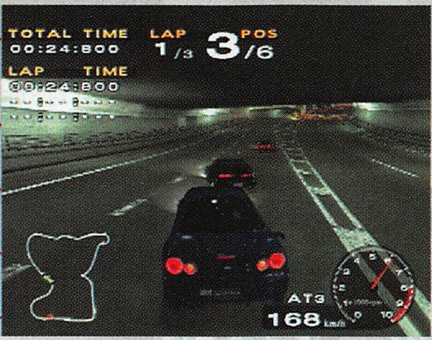
Now, I can handle the game's sub-par visual presentation—I am British after all, and am 'blessed' with poor eyesight (hold the dental jokes, please). Thus, the blurred nature of the in-car view bothers me little. What irks me is the only other view, which trails after the car. Fury hit it right on the head when he said, "It looks like a slightly higher-resolution PS game." Sure, the frame-rate's decent, save for those magical moments of multiple car slowdown, but it's not revolutionary. For a game on a system as hyped as the PS2 was—not to mention from a company with a pedigree such as Square's—it's more than a little disappointing.

If you can get past the lackluster visuals (which isn't so easy if you've already dropped a boatload o' cash on a PS2 and this game), though, get ready to jump into a state of massive learning curves. I should've known something was up when every other demo screen at last month's TGS flashed the words "wrong way" in bold crimson letters... Yes, everything you've heard is true. You'll probably have an easier time bench pressing a Buick than mastering the control of *Type-S* in one sitting. The cars don't spin out so much as they do list... like a boat. That's not to say that it's impossible—to Square's credit, it's included a staggered Assist, Normal and Simulation control scheme. Just be prepared to put a few hours into it to master the very basics.

Ultimately, *Type-S* fails for one reason: It strays waaaay too far into the sim realm to be fully enjoyable. I like my console sims like I like talking to my ex-girlfriends—very rarely, and if necessary, very briefly. The fact that it sports some of the top licensed cars from Japan and Europe might go a long way with some motor-sausages, but I generally crave a bit more from my driving games. Dare I ask for more than one original play mode with a scant few tracks and the ability to modify cars past the standard brakes, handling and rim options? How about something that's remotely fun? Well, if I'm going to drop seventy bones on something of this caliber when *RRV*'s already in my collection, you'd better believe I want something fun. If you're hell-bent on going the import racer route, do yourself a huge favor and opt for *SEGA GT*...

Kodomo is now reduced to driving through the streets of L.A. and yelling, "Type-S!" randomly at passing drivers.





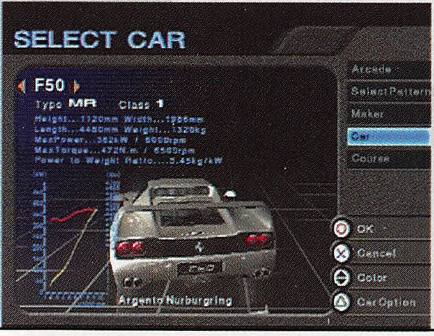
■ ライン取りの例 ■

tsukuba
circuit

SLPS
20007
NTSC J

DRIVING EMOTION TYPE-S™

ネジコン（SLPH-00001/SLPH-00069）を使用する場合は、ネジコン付属の取扱説明書をお読みの上、Optionの KEY CONFIG を正しく設定してください。

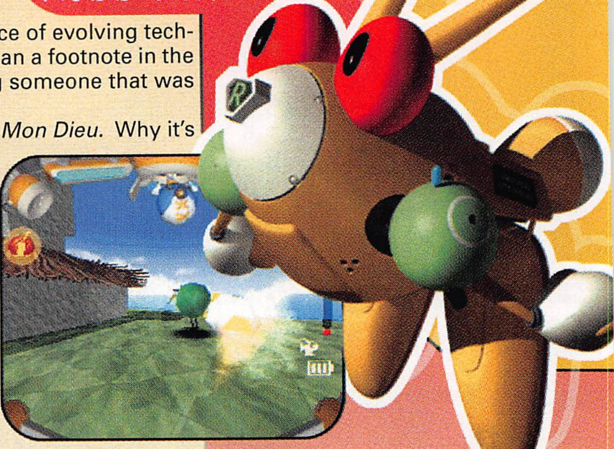




Viewpoint Score :64	Developer - Escape Publisher - Square	1-2 Players Available Now Japan	Kodomo: Hmmm, what exactly does the "S" stand for?

R REVIEW

PlayStation2



What happens to the pioneer of a genre when it can't keep up with the pace of evolving technology? Hopefully, it falls by the wayside and becomes nothing more than a footnote in the annals of gaming history. After all, is there anything worse than seeing someone that was once über-cool become a washed-up has-been? Just ask Gary Coleman...

Which brings us to the latest installment to the *Jumping Flash* series, *Robbit Mon Dieu*. Why it's not called *Jumping Flash 3* is a mystery to me... I guess it all works out, though—at least the *JF* name won't be sullied too much by this aborted attempt at a 3D platformer.

Now, just so everybody knows (before I bring out the rusty, blood-stained hacksaw and ball-peen hammer), you'll not find a bigger fan of the *JF* games than me—I played the first two chapters inside and out, back to front, etc. I loved these games, with their wacky, super-fruity character designs (witness Robbit, our mechanized rabbit hero, the sad, helpless Muu-Muus, who are eclipsed in 'cool factor' only by Konami's Moai heads, and the insidious Baron Aloha in all his Hawaiian-shirted glory) and 'we beat *Mario 64* to the punch' 3D platforming gameplay. Yep, the first two *JF* games were great, and I'll have words with anyone that thinks otherwise. *Robbit Mon Dieu,* though, is another matter entirely...

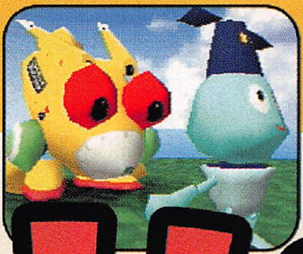


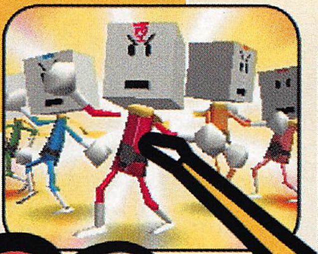
Sadly, what once was whimsical, fun and even a little creative now seems to have been thrown to the wolves (in GameFan-speak, that's any game that appears to have been coded by a Net Yaroze user... or one that's been developed in Dreamcast WinCE). It's ugly (the game sports the same engine and, apparently, the same textures as earlier games), bland, uninspired, tired, and a host of other less-than-flattering adjectives. In fact, the whole thing comes off as one of those third-party, PC-style, bolt-on, unlicensed accessory packs that used to plague games like *Quake* and *Doom* back in the day. Needless to say, this isn't a game you should buy, play or otherwise associate with—for once, the fact that it's virtually impossible to find is a good thing.

So now that *Robbit*'s all washed up, maybe it's time to take other late, great gaming characters and form some sort of support group. Hey, it would be better for them than living on the dole and generally being big eyesores. Alas, poor *Robbit,* we knew ye well...

ECM never really liked the third serving of rabbit stew—it just wasn't game-y enough...











Hasenpfeffer

If you get one thing out of *Robbit Mon Dieu*, it should be this:

1/8 cup oil
1 Robbit cut into serving-sized pieces
2 celery stalks
2 onions
3 cups water
1 tbsp chopped garlic
1/8 cup honey
8 oz. barbecue sauce
salt and pepper to taste

Place oil in a roasting pan and heat the Robbit pieces until brown. Remove the oil. Chop up the onions and celery and add to the pan with the water and remaining ingredients. Cover and bake at 350 degrees for an hour and a half (this slow roasting process makes the nuts and bolts tender). Remove the Robbit and reduce sauce until it coats the back of a spoon. Serve on a hot plate and enjoy!

R REVIEW	ECM: All good things must come to an end...	Developer - Sugar & Rockets Publisher - SCEI	1 Player Available Now	Viewpoint Score: 50







Monster Farm Battle Card Professional

モンスターファームバトルカード

There are three quick ways of deciphering whether you're a turbo sausage... Have you ever uttered the phrase, "How could he hit me? His THACO was 20?" How about, "I tap my swamp for one black mana to cast Dark Ritual," or the increasingly popular online RPG line, "Has anyone seen my body?" If so, then you're a first-class geek. Despite my best efforts to the contrary, I, too, am a full-blown nerd. I managed to escape adolescence without ever rolling a twenty-sided die, and to this day, I refuse to go anywhere near *EverQuest*—but when a college 'friend' introduced me to the collectible card game *Magic: The Gathering,* my fate was sealed. Within months, I was casting first-turn Juzams, frying opponents with The Zoo and flying to pro tours all over the U.S. When I heard, then, that Tecmo was developing a PlayStation version of *Monster Farm Battle Card,* a game that would combine two of the loves of my life *(Monster Rancher* and card games), I was all over it.

The premise is simple: Battle it out against other card-wielding breeders in a three-on-three duel to the death... er, K.O. Teams are made up of three creatures from the stable of *Monster Rancher* favorites (Suezo, Mocchi, Tiger et al.), while the deck—your means of fighting—is comprised of fifty cards of different types (attack, special move, magic, group attack, counter, power-up and global effect cards). Like in *MtG,* you can answer every move your opponent makes, assuming you have the cards and guts to cast 'em, but like the previous *Monster Rancher* games, guts determine when to attack and when to play defense. Players can trade in cards at the end of a turn to build up attacks and defenses, but if, for some odd reason, a player can't draw another card, the game is instantly over.

Monster Farm Battle Card is not for everybody (yikes, combine two niche games to form a super-niche game!), but I was hooked after just a few hours. Beat an opponent and you'll win his/her cards... which means that your library of available cards grows with every victory. Plus, you can use music or game CDs from your personal library to spawn new cards, just like making monsters in *Monster Rancher*! *Monster Farm Battle Card* features the depth of a *Monster Rancher* game and the addictive quality of collectible cards, and thus, is a potentially fatal time-waster. I'd balk on an import purchase, however—the U.S. version's due out sometime in June. Either way, *Monster Rancher Battle Card* should be one of the few must-have PlayStation titles of this year.













Eggo did manage to escape adolescence, but every once in a while, his voice cracks like Peter Brady's. "When it's time to change, you've got to rearrange..."

Viewpoint Score: 87	Developer - Tecmo	1-2 Players	EGGO: There goes my social life... again.
	Publisher - Tecmo	Available Now Japan	

R Review







FINAL FIGHT REVENGE







Ah, the trials and tribulations of the final real Saturn game (sorry, but the countless semi-porn girlfriend games that Kodomo goes 'gaga' over don't count)... Capcom's *Final Fight Revenge* is a game that brings new meaning to the raging debate over the right to life, whether or not it's better to let a console go quietly into the long, dark night... or go kicking and screaming in utter agony.

If we imagine the development of *Final Fight Revenge* (bear with me here for a moment), it probably went something like this... Development Phase One: Hope for the best, prepare for the worst. Development Phase Two: The best-laid plans of mice and men do sometimes go astray. Development Phase Three: "Egad, we've got to get this thing out—this sucker's done, bag it and tag it." Keep in mind that this is probably an overly *optimistic* view of what actually happened at Capcom USA during the game's dev cycle...

What's that? You didn't know that *FFR* was initially developed in the good ol' U.S. of A.? Oh, yes, I'm afraid so. I'm not one to indulge in the stereotype that "Americans don't make games as well as the Japanese do," but I'm willing to concede defeat at least this time out... The most saddening fact is that the guy behind *FFR* also created *Aero the Acrobat,* one of the better 16-bit platformers back in the day. I guess everyone's entitled to a bad day, but there are bad days, and then there are **bad** days...

Now, if I'm tearing open a last-generation Saturn game (What would that be—fifth? Sixth?), I have a certain level of expectation that must be met—I mean, it's not like I'm in it for the graphics. No, at this point in time, I expect (at the very least) a game that's 10-20% better aesthetically than, say, *Fighting Vipers*—a nicely Gouraud-shaded number, with plentiful texture mapping and solid, vibrant color. Well, you can scratch all three of those pipe dreams off of your list, because none of them are present in this shambling mockery of a Saturn/ST-V title. Picture super-low resolution and flat-shaded polys coupled with some of the lowest poly-count models ever to grace a 3D fighting game, and you'll start to get the idea... Of course, my paltry words are hardly sufficient to convey just how poor it really looks... Believe it or not, after the really sweet title screen (honestly, I think that's where all the money went), I was actually stoked to give this one a play. Then the actual game started <shudder>.

Of course, I'm not one to write off a game simply because it fails to perform visually. After all, not every Saturn game can be *Virtua Fighter 2*. I mean if a game plays well, we should all be able to look past its ugly dress, bad hair and chronic halitosis, right? Wrong. The game plays marginally well, but it's so hard-pressed to overcome its obvious aesthetic issues that it just never makes up lost ground. Essentially, the gameplay's $200,000 short of the visuals. Still not getting the picture? Perhaps this will explain things a bit more clearly: The initial version of *Virtua Fighter* that graced the Saturn at launch is a better-looking and infinitely better-playing game than *FFR*. If that doesn't get the point across, then nothing will...

Nope, there'll be no joy in Mudville today (Mudville is precisely what this game's color palette was modeled after)... Capcom really would've done better if it had just let sleeping dogs lie. Instead, they ported the game over from the arcade sludge-works that spawned it. In summation, I have to ask: Is it better to let someone die a slow, lingering death, or quickly, with some measure of dignity? Under ordinary circumstances, that's no easy decision to make, but in this case, I say pull the plug... fast.



R REVIEW	ECM: My eyes, my eyes...	Developer - Capcom / Publisher - Capcom	1-2 Players / Available Now Japan	Viewpoint Score: 40

Although ECM is in therapy from the shock of not liking a Saturn game, he is expected to make a full recovery in time for E3.

You say you're developing a console game based on a popular anime, and I say you've got problems. Historically, a game spawned from anything resembling an animated series has about as much chance of success as GF layout artist Core has of beating me at *Tekken Tag Tournament* (which is sadly the opposite when it comes to *Quake II*). If the final version of ESP's upcoming DC RPG *Record of Lodoss War: The Advent of Cardice* can hold true to its current course, though, things might just change, instilling hope for all future *Macross* titles. Well—maybe that's thinking too far ahead...

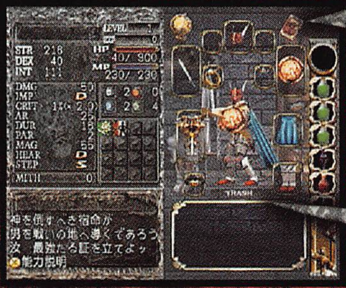
As it stands right now, *ROLW* has a lot going for it. ESP's created an original story set in the *LW* universe, but without any specifically known characters. I must admit, my knowledge of *ROLW* is sparse (my sausagedom does have its limits), but the premise is a good one. Players start out with nothing more than the skin on their backs, and they must hack and slash through any and all opponents, from lowly bats to enormous dragons. Of course, equipping and upgrading various weapons and armor will come into play, as will an extensive inventory of items to aid players and keep their hit points maxed out.

Its *Diablo*-style view signals the biggest break from the RPG norm, and its world sports multiple adventurous realms, from dense elven forests to massive labyrinthine catacombs. Graphically, the world is solid, with clean-textured polygonal floors and finely detailed animated characters—though with the fixed camera view, it's tough to fully appreciate them. Still, the action flows as fast as you can swing your sword, and touts a difficulty level that'll put most gamers to the test.











RECORD OF LODOSS WAR
The Advent of Cardice
ロードス島戦記 邪神降臨



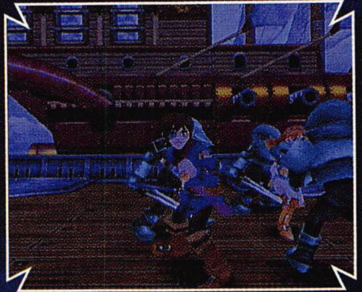
But back to the camera angle. This is my lone gripe about the game. Both the characters and the landscape are rendered with polygons, so I fail to understand why *ROLW* doesn't include a feature similar to *Final Fantasy Tactics* that allows you to rotate the view with the analog triggers. It's possible in *ROLW*, but is limited to certain situations and, much worse, specific degrees. It's not uncommon to miss a door or an enemy behind it thanks to bad camera angles.

Regardless, though, *ROLW* is by far one of the most promising titles to come along in some time, and is certainly one of the most unique. Its June Japanese release date is quietly looming. If its camera angles can only be adjusted, it'll rapidly scorch import DCs come summer... K

DEVELOPER - ESP	1 PLAYER	KODOMO: A QUALITY ANIME-BASED CONSOLE TITLE?
PUBLISHER - ESP	AVAILABLE 6/29 JAPAN	

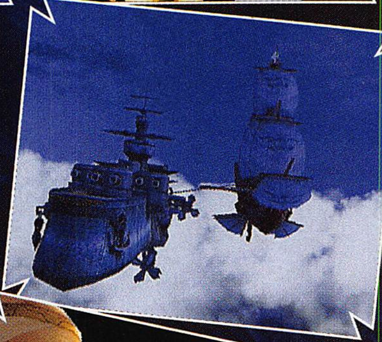
PREVIEW





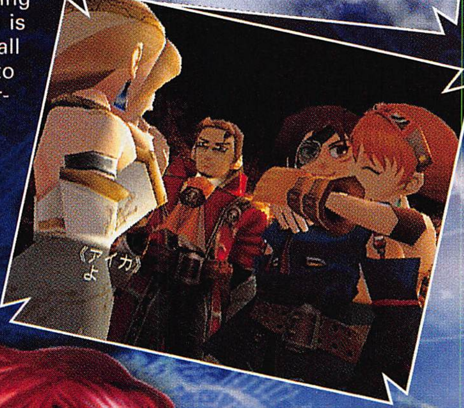






Upon my return from the spring Tokyo Game Show, one particular item was at the top of every GF staffer's list of 'need to see right now'—well, barring Dango and his persistent yelps for the new Temjin figure with the Super Mega Kung Fu Grip (think "Bicentennial Man" between Pastry and *VOOT* Toy <stomach begins to churn>...). Yes, *Eternal Arcadia* was *the* disc in demand at Sega's mega-sized booth—the demo disappeared in under two hours. Thankfully, I was able to snag a copy, and have just finished an extensive sit-down with the game, which is still in development.

First and foremost, the graphics look like the quality material we'd expect from a Sega in-house team (members from the *Sakura Wars, Dragon Force* and *Phantasy Star* teams have all contributed). The game's anime style is prevalent, but still fits the game quite nicely. Each character is very well designed, with expressive, emotion-filled faces constructed of radiant, fluid polygons. They really seem to come to life with multiple facets of independently animated clothing and *Soul Calibur*-like motion blurs emanating from edged weapons. Both the spacious skies and the sturdy ships that ply the sky are sights to behold—with no texture break-up and just a hint of pop-up deep in the backgrounds. The enemies look impressive, too, ranging from the massive 'blob' boss (which is semi-transparent, so we get a look at all the bones and skulls in its belly) to the simple, armor-laden baddies.



Eternal Arcadia

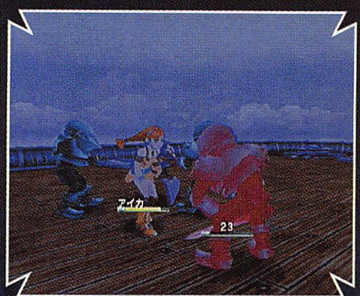
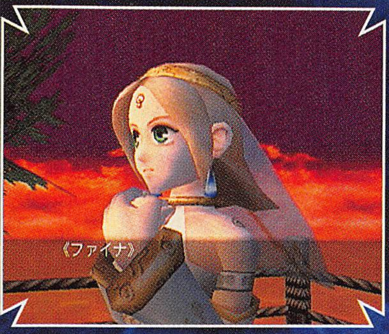
Sega RPG Heaven!



PREVIEW	KODOMO: Can Sega repeat its past RPG glory?	Developer - Sega	1 Player
		Publisher - Sega	Available Summer '00 Japan







The game's main character is a young pirate named Vyse, who, along with his female cohorts Aika and Fina, must help the Blue Pirate Guild defend itself against a rival clan. That rival faction is expanding its influence into Blue Guild territory, and seeks to take over the little bit of land left in the world... Vyse and co. must seek them out and put an end to their vile machinations.

Right now, *EA* contains but a smattering of each gameplay aspect—namely, piloting the airship through the skies, exploring the floating islands (think "The Jetsons" meets "Gilligan's Island") and battling the evil pirates and special bosses. Each island is filled with various civilians, and is open to exploration. Search for various items, or play hide-and-seek with some local children. Vyse and friends can also enter buildings and go deep into the earth of the islands—or just retreat and head back to the dock where their ship awaits.

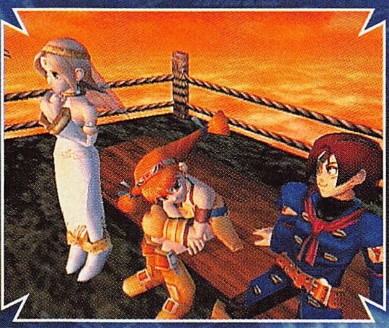
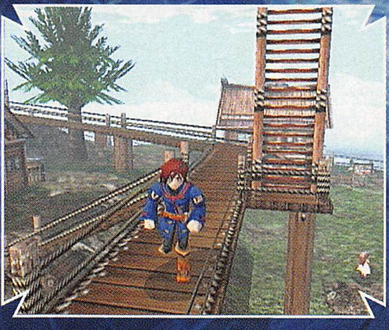
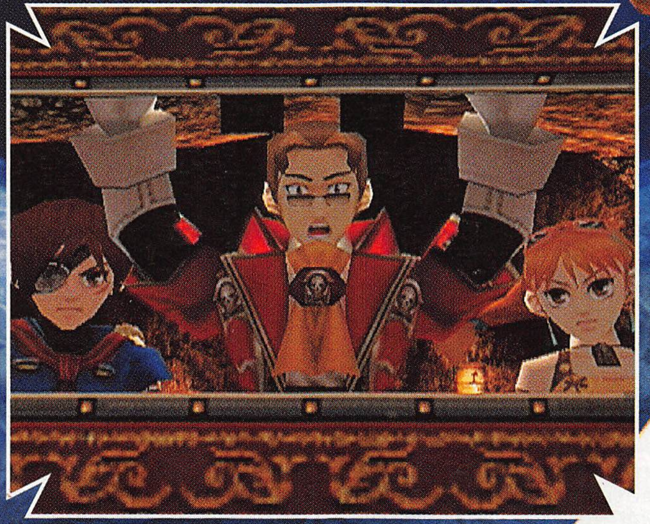


Take to the skies and explore a massive world with adventure in your heart and steel by your side!



Eternal Arcadia's battle system is currently a beefed-up version of the standard RPG fare, including basic actions such as Flee, Attack, Defend, Use Item and Use Magic. A chargeable "guts" meter has also been included to unleash powerful attacks. Essentially, players input their commands, and one of the three party members will respond, while the remaining two will continue to move around in the background. Finally, the game features a "stone" system. As our heroes progress, six different-colored meteors may fall from any one of the moons in the sky. Collect them, and you can equip them for various elemental effects.

Unfortunately, Sega has yet to announce a firm release date, so we'll have to wait a while to see how the final product stacks up to the rich heritage of Sega-developed games. It's no secret that the Dreamcast has a dubious record of RPGs, but hopefully, *Eternal Arcadia* (not to mention the upcoming *PSO* and *Grandia II*) will do a lot to counteract that mystique. K


shooter alley



Dimahoo

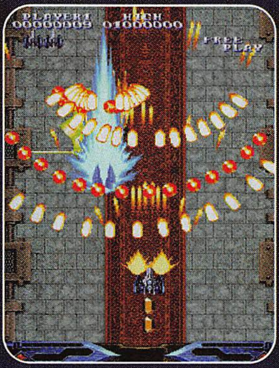
Hell Has Frozen Over

These days, new arcade shooters come along with the frequency of Halley's comet, so it may come as a great shock to many of you that there is a **new** shooter available **now** in U.S arcades—not an import, not a gray market pseudo-release, and certainly not mass-produced by monkeys in Hong Kong. No, it's a brand-new, never-before-seen, honest-to-goodness shoot-'em-up for the U.S. market, released by Capcom (which, apparently, is the only arcade company left with any sack)... *Dimahoo* is its name, and it's the latest in a series of shooters from Japan, courtesy of Raizing. Don't know Raizing? How 'bout a little ditty by the name of *Bloody Roar* and its not-so-solid sequel? Do I have your attention now?









The Family Tree

Dimahoo hails from the *Mahou Daisakusen* line, a series of shooters with a rather nice pedigree... The series originally spawned on X68000 PCs in Japan, then jumped to arcades with *Shippu Mahou Daisakusen* (*Kingdom Grand Prix,* for those of you that actually played it on Saturn—import-only, of course). *Great Mahou Daisakusen,* a.k.a. *Dimahoo,* is now the third installment to the trilogy (well, for now, it's a trilogy). Of course, *Shippu* was as much a racing game as it was a shooter. It's rather hard to explain—you'll just have to track down a copy and find out for yourself...

Anyway, 'shmups' have been Raizing's bread and butter for some time now, and while its very large development staff has made inroads on other genres with titles like *Bloody Roar 1* & *2* (as well as a gun game for Namco, a pseudo-sequel to the *Gun Bullet* games), it's returned time and time again to what made it the company that it is today. Raizing's past shmups

REVIEW				
R	ECM: It's gettin' chilly in here...	Developer - Raizing Publisher - Capcom	1-2 Players Available Now (yes, in the U.S.)	Viewpoint Score: 93

include *Soykyu Gurentai, Battle Garegga, Battle Bakraid* and *Armed Police Batrider* (among others)—obviously, these guys **know** how to make a shooter, and rank among the shmup elite (Psikyo, Cave and Seibu Kaihatsu are the others... I'll stop short of including Yakumi, developer of *Giga Wing* and the upcoming *Mars Matrix,* till that one ships).

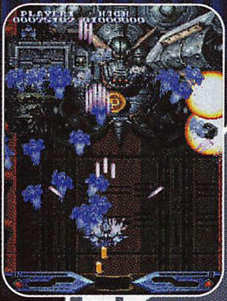




CPS-2 Rides Again

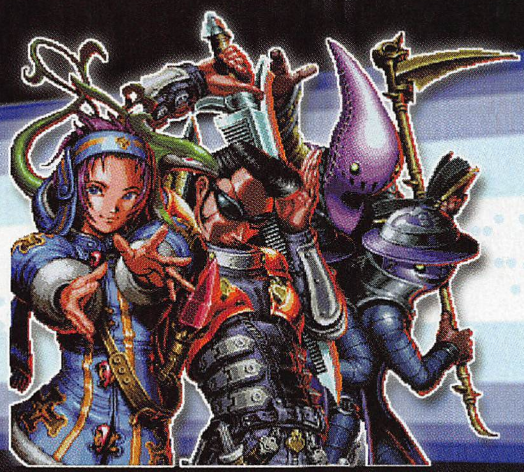
The big difference between *Dimahoo* and most of Raizing's other shooter outings is that it runs on Capcom's CPS-2 hardware. You know, the age-old rig that's run everything from *Street Fighter Alpha* to *Giga Wing*—it's one of arcade history's longest-running development platforms, yielding only to SNK's Neo Geo MVS. In fact, the only other non-custom hardware shooter Raizing's ever produced is *Soukyu Gurentai,* the ST-V-based (Saturn arcade hardware) beast that proved convincingly that there was still life beyond 3D, texture-mapped polygons.

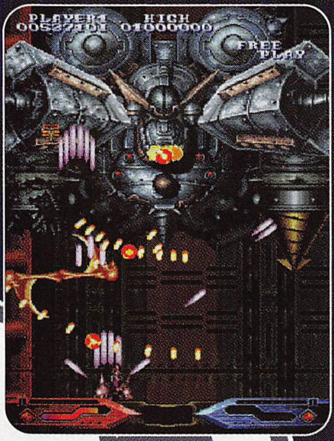
But what does all that mean to you and me? Well, like I said, the CPS-2 is one of arcade gaming's all-time stalwarts (it's the hardware behind *Giga Wing* and 19XX). Unfortunately, as a result, we as gamers have just come to expect a certain 'look' from games running on it... and *Dimahoo* is no exception.

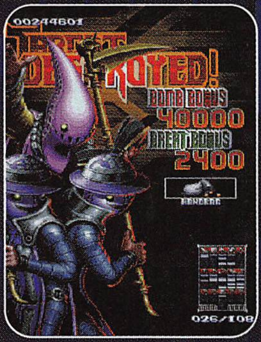


Graphically, there's no question about it: *Dimahoo*'s driven by the same hardware that powered many of Capcom's finest hours... The graphics are detailed and solidly animated and feature massive quantities of sprites and large, multi-joined bosses. They aren't as over-the-top as the typical Treasure-spawned behemoth, but they're certainly in line with anything you may have seen in *Gunbird 2.* They're simply teeming with intricately detailed art. Fluidly animated foes flit about the screen, eager to reduce you to a smoking ruin.











Been There, Done That

As usual, though, the burning question is, how does it play? After all, how much variation could there possibly be from game to game when "all you're doing" (their words, not mine) is blowing things up? I mean, what more could there possibly be? Power up, annihilate and repeat ad infinitum. This is where most people make a grave error, though, a miscalculation of sorts. I mean, just because the basic play mechanics are the same throughout the genre (gee, isn't that what defines a genre?) doesn't make every game "the same."

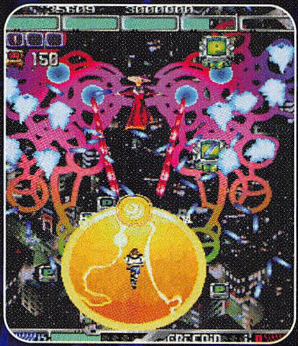
The key to *Dimahoo*'s gameplay is its collection of weapons, armor, food, etc., scattered throughout... The secondary attack (which is enabled by charging the primary weapon) or bomb attack will unleash various and sundry items that players must collect as they rain down the screen (not unlike the frenzied icon collecting of a Cave shooter, i.e., *ESPrade* and the *Don Pachi* series). This will garner massive amounts of points (the prime motivation behind a shmup, incidentally) and build players nice, handy arsenals for... what?

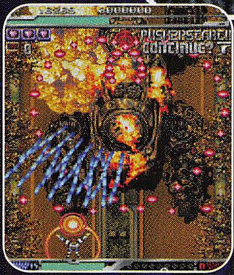
Now Playing At An Arcade Near You

Yes, the game's out now! And from what I've gathered from Capcom, it's performing halfway decently...maybe there's a shred of hope after all. Hopefully, the meager sales of *Gunbird 2* in Japan won't prevent it from landing on Dreamcast sometime soon. It's frightening that the import version would probably find a wider audience on Dreamcast than at an actual arcade with it on play. My, how times have changed... **ECM**













A Mad Quest

As I continue my one-man crusade to resurrect the shooter back to a respectable position in the gaming industry (it's a long, harrowing road from 'spat on'), I've had to go to great lengths to keep my habit alive… I've gone so far as to spend big bucks on the newest JAMMA boards and a vertically oriented arcade cabinet to play them in. It's not a path for the weak-willed, or anybody who's even remotely interested in having a social life outside of video games. Thankfully, however, we here at GameFan suffer no such delusions—though we're occasionally stricken with a bout of 'social life envy' ("so that's what it's like on Saturday night… neat"—after viewing "Saturday Night Fever"). Which brings us to my latest acquisition, via the Land of the Rising Sun (I hope my girlfriend didn't really want that shiny new bracelet)…

Decisions, Decisions

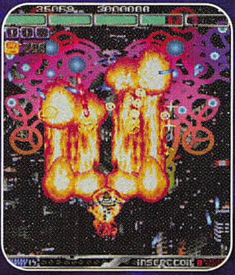
Spaceship or super-powered teenager? That must be the burning question all shooter development houses have to answer at one time or another. It's a tough call, as each brings its own unique challenges to the development cycle. Pick the old standby of 'little ship versus planet-pulverizing armada,' and you can probably skimp a bit on the tougher graphical work—after all, it's a lot easier to draw and animate a fictional spacecraft than a human being. This probably also explains the staggering number of shooters based on spacecraft (and, ergo, the comparatively rare 'human-powered' shooter). Enter, then, Cave's *ESPrade,* which is perhaps the most impressively drawn and animated shooter ever…

CPS What?

It's been a long time since I've seen a crowd of people gather 'round a shooter and actually have to pick their jaws up off the floor (*Radiant Silvergun* was the last instance of such a phenomenon), but that's just the sort of reaction *ESPrade* garners. Cave's proprietary arcade hardware is truly capable of some stunning animation and brilliant color—the animation on the main characters is nothing short of breathtaking. It has little to no parallax (what shooter does these days?), but the actual artwork is second to none (well, second only to Cave's own *Guwange*—more on that next month).

Raizing? Psikyo? Rookies.

Yes, the graphics are not only stunning, but the gameplay's better than the standard shoot-bomb affair as well. Players have three attacks: a primary shot (one of three types of waves; primary shots differ between the three playable characters), a secondary shot (which is more destructive than the primary shot, but requires charging for maximum destructive force) and a shield (which will protect the ship from all harm and, once released, will generate the game's bomb attack). Combining the secondary shot with the primary shot will allow point combos up to sixteen times higher than the normal score for a kill. It's quite a sight, really, after a particularly intense volley, to see the screen littered with '16x' icons.



Now What?

I've only seen this game in two places, the Pak Mann arcade in Pasadena, California and my apartment, so the odds are that this one's going to be a tough one to track down. The game was never officially released in the U.S., either, which won't help matters. But you must persevere and hunt it down, if only to experience exactly what the creator of the *DonPachi* series of shooters has been toiling away on in the interim. As it stands, they're the best in the biz… **ECM**





REVIEW ECM:	Developer - Cave	1-2 Players	Viewpoint Score	:91
Kanedaaaaaa!!!	Publisher - Atlus	Available Now (at ECM's place)		

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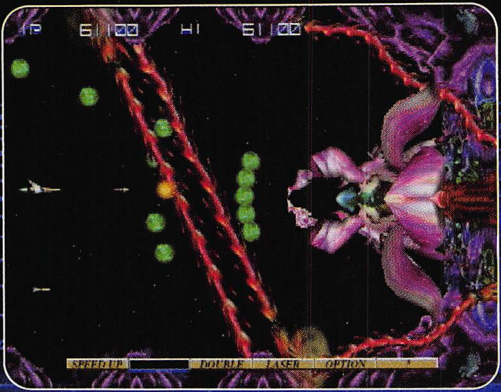
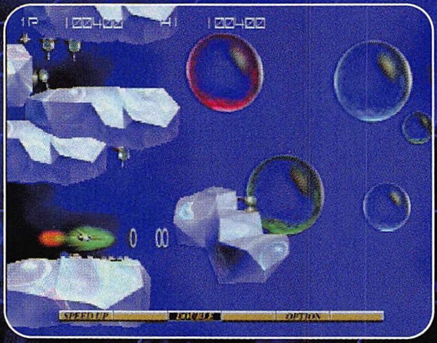
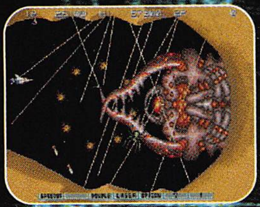
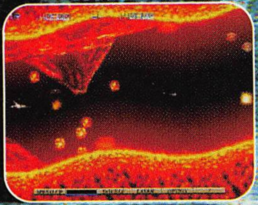
Why Back Issues?

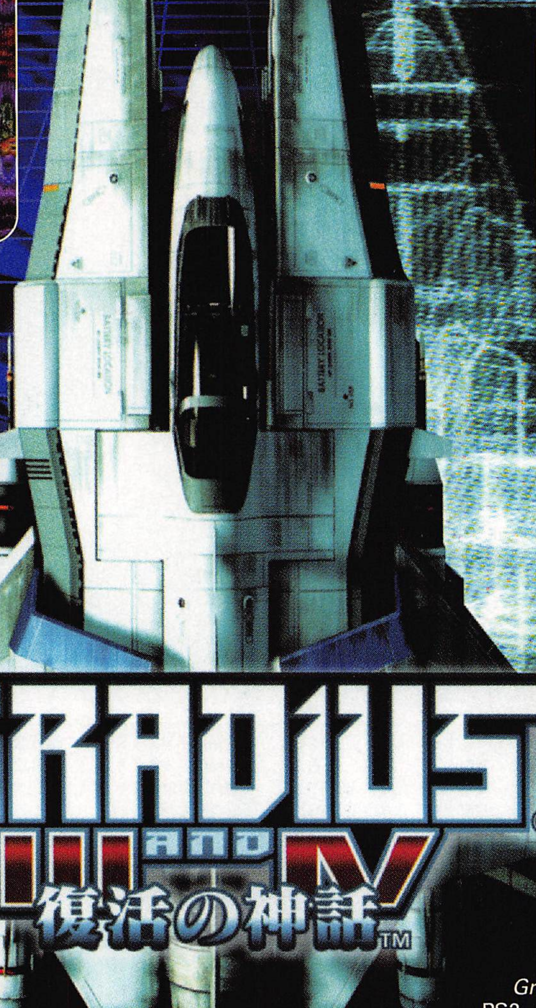
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GRADIUS III AND IV 復活の神話

A new shooter comes out, and ECM has *me* write it up? Hmm, I should've known better. Anytime ECM, supreme defender of all things shooter-related, asks a lowly editor (especially someone without his vast knowledge of the shooter world... you say "social life," ECM says "*Axelay*") to cover a title in his favorite genre, you know something's amiss. But this is Konami's famed *Gradius III and IV* running on the ultra-powerful PlayStation 2 hardware, right? Why in *Radiant Silvergun*'s name isn't ECM clamoring to get his pint-sized mitts on this fine shooter? I mean, it's been some time since I last played a *Gradius* game (the SNES version, if I'm not mistaken), and I'm sure things have improved. Yeah, I bet the graphics are unbelievable, and the bosses take up the whole screen and... holy %*#$, what am I looking at?!? Please tell me I didn't blow all that cash on a system just to relive the old 16-bit 'glory days!'

Sounds like a pretty severe reaction, doesn't it? Well, believe me, you don't even know the half of it. A few days back, I spent nearly four hours in bumper-to-bumper traffic (so I got a bit lost on the way, funny how the 405 looks just like the 210) to pick up what I thought was going to be one of the PS2's more impressive releases... The last *Gradius* game hadn't even been released in the States, so I really didn't know what to expect. Well, after powering up my PS2 and enduring a few jaw-dropping moments of sheer agony, I came to a painful realization. Someone in Japan—some top executive at Konami—thought that this (*Gradius III & IV* on the PS2) would be a good idea. Forget about a much-improved port of *Metal Gear Solid,* oh, and that whole *Contra* property—let's deliver a shooter with age-old visuals and—get this—boring and (this one's just for you, ECM) UNINSPIRED gameplay!

Yes, there are two separate *Gradius* games on this magnificent PS2 disc, *Gradius III* and *IV.* If you remember, *Gradius III* was released way back in '91 for the SNES, and even further back in Japanese arcades (circa 1989). Well, gamers who recall the port are also sure to recall its slowdown—and the fully emulated rev chugs every bit as badly. But then, a bit of nostalgia never hurt anyone. Hah, fooled ya... *Gunbird 2, Giga Wing* and hey, even the import PS-only *Gradius Gaiden* looks better than this. I'm telling you, other than its hi-res graphics, this is easily the worst *Gradius* game ever produced. The level design is mundane and the overall presentation's lacking in nearly every category. And man, you've gotta love the seamless level transitions... nothing like seeing Konami try (however feebly) to hide the loading.

Take a look at the game's blazing intro (which is easily one of the best I've seen... period), then ask yourself, was that not exactly what Sony had promised with the PS2: CG-like graphics? I love a bit of retro gaming just as much as the next guy, but not when Konami's only other PS2 game available is *Drum Mania.* Please, Konami, you were once one of my favorite developers. You could manipulate 2D graphics like no other, and you used to care about your stable franchises like *Castlevania* and *Contra.* Please, let the PS2 be part of your rebirth... and not something for non-gamers to get their groove on with.

Fury has a hard time with shooters because generally (in most shooters, that is) some form of "budduns" are involved.

R REVIEW	FURY: 16-BIT POWER, 128-BIT PRICE TAG...	DEVELOPER - KONAMI / PUBLISHER - KONAMI	1 PLAYER / AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN	VIEWPOINT SCORE: 72



RAYCRISIS

Thanks to ECM's readily available, all-encompassing library of shooters, I've rediscovered my love for this classic genre. You really have to sit down and play a shooter in the comfort of your own home to realize how much fun it can be testing your reflexes and blowing things up. And so, in the greater interests of promoting shooters worldwide, I'm recommending you **not** buy this game. See, *Ray Crisis* (the third installment in the *Layer Section* series) is not representative of a good shooter.

It's got graphics that are pretty amazing by PlayStation standards ("PlayStation" being the operative word—a console that's over five years old, and showing its age worse than Kathleen Turner). You'll see explosions galore, massive bosses, and enough rotation and grandeur to leave your head spinning. But this game looked better when it was called *Galactic Attack* on Saturn (the original *Layer Section*), which had more going on visually. Not only that, *Galactic Attack* played better than *Ray Crisis*, which suffers from a heavy reliance on the lock-on. The normal gun is merely an afterthought, which is useless more than half the time.

That's not the only thing that bothers me. Other than being a lock-on fest, *Ray Crisis* suffers from that mysterious malaise which plagues certain shooters... shootus interruptus (i.e., a condition where you're flying along, happy as can be, saving the planet and collecting power-ups. When suddenly... BAM! You're dead.). Apparent cause of death? Hand of God? No, staying in a "hot zone"—an area you weren't supposed to be in. This is also a problem prevalent in shooters of the *R-type* persuasion, which I don't care for. My idea of a fun vertically scroller? Dodging waves of bullets in a Psikyo game like *Strikers 1945 II* on Saturn or *Gunbird 2* for Dreamcast.

Now before you brand me a jaded shooter gamer and warm up your spam-spewing e-mail clients, hear me out. If you want to play a great shooter with a healthy mix of lock-on and standard shooting elements, get the domestic game *Galactic Attack* on Saturn. Don't have a Saturn? You can probably get one with the game for less than the price of this import PlayStation game. Then, you'll have not only a great game, but an even better console for shooters (the last known sanctuary for this dying breed). If you already own *Galactic Attack*, try to get an import copy of Raizing's *Soukyugurentai*, which is *Layer Section* on steroids in every category: eye candy, music, and gameplay. Ahh, it feels good to recommend a couple Saturn shooters other than *Radiant Silvergun*, because Treasure's masterpiece is far from the be-all and end-all for Saturn shooters.

Eggo also recommends Taito's 'other' PS shooter, the horizontal scroller G-Darius.

Viewpoint Score	Developer - Taito	1 Player	Eggo: Generating Huge
:71	Publisher - Taito	Available Now Japan	Anti-Body Sem Slut!

R Review









UNDEAD LINE



From: PalSoft
Original Release: 1991

And To Top It All Off...

After asphyxiating on a veritable flood of shooting delights, you probably thought I'd exhume the latest plot in The Graveyard to unearth some unique, relaxing puzzle game or a super-cute SD platformer... not a chance, mis amigos. This month, we start with a nice little rant on difficult games, followed by a nostalgic trip through the mist-shrouded confines of the 'yard to unveil... *Undead Line.*

Hard as a Rock

There are hard games, and then there are *hard* games—titles that would make a battle-hardened, code red-runnin' marine sob like a little girl that's lost her little dolly. Take games like *Target Earth, Chakan, Contra Hard Corps, The Adventures of Batman & Robin* (Genesis), *Batsugun, Batman Returns* (Sega CD)—they're just a few among a rogue gallery of pipe-wielding thugs. Any of them would be a true test of raw gaming skill on their default difficulty settings. Crank it up to 'hard,' though, and within two minutes, you'll be a greasy splotch on the carpet (and you know how Mom hates greasy splotches...).

Yeah, those games are hard, but then there's "You cheap *%$!, I'll see you in hell!" **HARD**. There are only two games I've ever played that fit into this hardcore gamer-mauling category: *Project X2* on PlayStation, a lunatic, over-the-top, so-cheap-it's-laughable affair by those fine blokes at Team 17, the lovable chaps that brought you the ultra-hot *Worms* in all its various guises... and then there's *Undead Line*.

The Newest Entry in the Guinness Book of World Records

Now, the thing about *Undead Line* (PalSoft, creator of PCE/TG16 *Magical Chase*, circa 1991) is that, yes, it's difficult—there's no other way to describe it. But the frustrating thing about it isn't that it's a hard shooter... after all, legions upon legions of those pour out of gaming history's every gaping orifice. Nope, the problem with *UL's* difficulty is as follows: If you die, you lose all power-ups. Wait, that's not all—if you die, you lose **all** power-ups and go back to the **beginning** of the level. No, not good enough—if you die, you lose **all** power-ups, go back to the **beginning** of the level and throw the controller out the window (or, in Reubus' case, *through* the window). See, there's nothing quite as infuriating as a shooter that strips you of all your precious armor, weapons and magical baubles **and** sends you screaming headlong to the start of the level. That's right, **no** checkpoints, no mid-level restarts—nothing. It'll make any

> ***"Does anybody out there remember my great and undying love for all shooters?"***

gamer's worst *R-Type* nightmares of old a quaint memory, an idle intellectual construct. Essentially, you'll battle through any one of the myriad levels, fighting tooth and nail, fist against flesh, to take on one of the game's stunning bosses, only to get stomped on, start over and repeat. Are you with me yet?

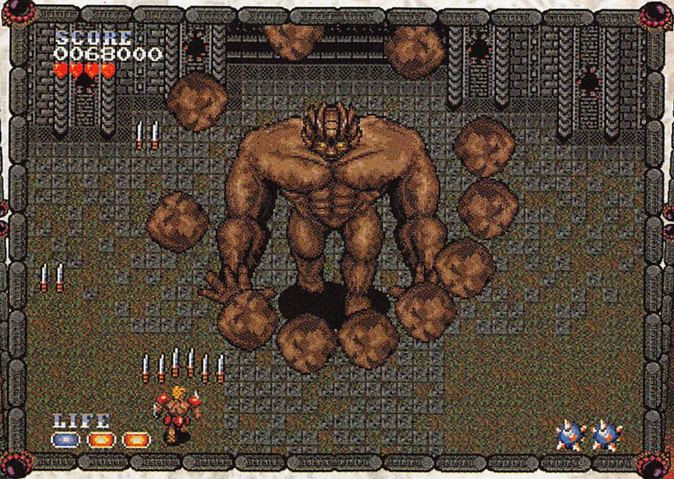
Now, before concluding that I hate this game with a passion akin to *Project X2*, let me assure you that this isn't the case. Quite the contrary, actually. This is a man's game, pure and simple. It takes real chops to keep coming back for more on this one. It's the video game equivalent of getting your ass kicked, then getting right back up and asking the nice man with the missing chromosome for some more—knowing full well that you'll be licking asphalt again in a few seconds. That's the kind of mentality (emphasis on 'mental') needed to take this beast on and come away victorious.











Might and Magic

Undead Line is a vertical-scrolling shooter from the *Elemental Master* school of design (and is actually a better and harder game than that Technosoft classic). The prototypical spaceship was replaced with a medieval warrior armed with razor-sharp swords and the unfettered might of the alchemical arts—think "Vampire Hunter D" meets Capcom's arcade classic *Commando*.

Players assume the role of a monster-mashing maniac who's out to show the undead that the only thing they're good for is fertilizer as he storms through six levels of zombie-crushing, demon-destroying, "look, Ma, I'm Ash from 'Evil Dead'"-style carnage.

Graphically, *UL* was (and is) unbelievable. It's been said innumerable times, but any team that could make

> **"...six levels of zombie-crushing, demon-destroying, Ash from 'Evil Dead'-style carnage..."**

the feeble Genesis color palette (which displayed approximately 61 colors out of 512) look good is a real testament to PalSoft and its artists. Of course, this is the same team responsible for the color explosion that is TG16 *Magical Chase*, so it's hardly surprising...

Vampire Hunters Wanted

So how do you score a copy of this little classic? Well, I hate to steer anyone toward eBay, but that's where I got my (second) copy. Try giving the guys at www.videogamedepot.com a call as well (they'll do their best to score you a copy, but no promises), or simply pray to the powers that be that you stumble across it in a dusty box in the back of some dingy import shop. However you go about it, though, know that once you score a copy, you're in possession of an artifact that should give you a very good idea as to whether you're among the elite... or not. **ECM**





AnimeFan

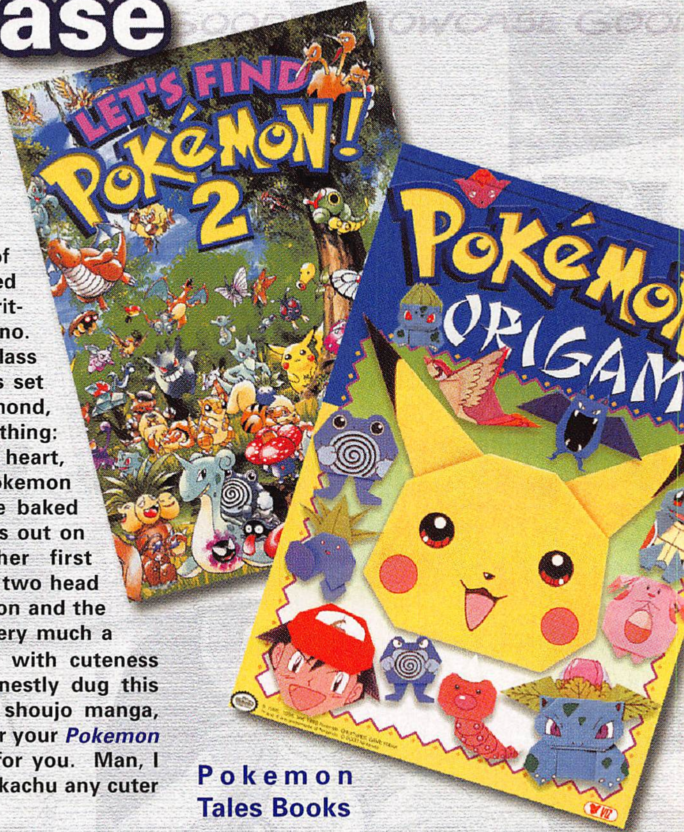
Anime, Manga, J-pop, Asian Live Action, Otaku Culture

A Note from Shidoshi...

Ah, geez... E3 is coming up. As cool as the show is, you wouldn't believe how chaotic, stressful, and mind-numbing an event it really is. Of course, I'm looking forward to racing through the front doors and crashing the Sega booth, as well as catching up with some old SoCal friends and industry contacts. I'd also like to give a special thanks this issue to Ayumi Hamasaki, whose beautiful voice and musical stylings kept me going through the completion of this month's AnimeFan. I picked up a few of her songs simply by accident, and instantly fell in love with her music. Trust me, you'll see more of her name around here in the future. She's the singer who did the theme song for *Thousand Arms*, by the way... - *shidoshi@gamefan.com*

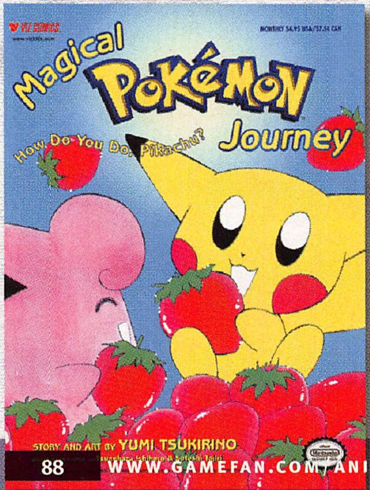
Goods Showcase

Pokemon Goods Update



Let's Find Pokemon 2

If you've seen the first *Let's Find Pokemon* book, then you know what to expect here. If you haven't, think back to the days of the *Where's Waldo* books, and replace the barber pole-shirted guy with Pokemon. A variety of detailed *Pokemon* art pieces are presented, each showing a busy day in the world of Pokemon. For each image, you're given three different Pokemon you are supposed to locate in the picture. The older a *Pokemon* fan you are, the less attractive this book will be. I mean, finding the Pokemon really aren't all that hard, so a person like me could blow through the book in under five minutes. If you know a younger *Pokemon* fan who enjoys a bit of a challenge, though, this might be for them. Basically, if you are old enough to wonder if you should admit to being a *Pokemon* fan, you're too old for this book.



Magical Pokemon Journey

Magical Pokemon Journey is one of many different manga titles based off of *Pokemon*, this one being written and drawn by Yumi Tsukirino. *MPJ* is the story of a cute young lass named Hazel, who has her sights set on the handsome Almond. Almond, however, is interested in only one thing: Pokemon. So, in order to catch his heart, Hazel is talked into becoming a Pokemon master on her own (should have baked him a Seafood Cake). As she sets out on her journey, she runs into her first Pokemon, Pikachu. Together, the two head off to find adventures and Pokemon and the key to Almond's heart. *MPJ* is very much a shoujo[1] title, and is overflowing with cuteness and flowers (well... it is!). I honestly dug this story, and if you can appreciate shoujo manga, you probably will too. If you prefer your *Pokemon* a bit more manly, this won't be for you. Man, I didn't think anyone could make Pikachu any cuter than he already was...

Pokemon Origami 2

Ah, now here's a fun afternoon: Not only can you enjoy *Pokemon*, you can actively participate and create something with your own two hands. This is the perfect project to bring parent and child together, with the parent helping the child in the art of paper folding, and the child explaining the vast and varied world of *Pokemon* with each different character they make. Or, if you're the type of teenager who takes a lunchbox to school or wears a pacifier around your neck to a rave, take this to your High School and be the hit among your friend at lunch break. *Pokemon Origami 2* contains Pikachu, Vulpix, Ash, Chancy, Poliwhirl, Poliwrath, Weedle, Golbat, Wigglytuff, Pidgeotto, Bulbasaur, Ivysaur, Oddish, and Squirtle.

Pokemon Tales Books

These are some of the cooler products to come out for *Pokemon*. Sure, they're meant for kids, but they are of outstanding quality. *PT* are small, "hard-paged" books that are short tales concerning a specific *Pokemon* monster. The cool part is that each book is done by a different artist, with beautiful illustrations all of the way through. The most recent batch of *Pokemon Tales* are *Meet Mew*, *Snorlax's Snack*, *Jigglypuff's Magic Lullaby*, and *Lapras Makes a Friend*. Out of these four, I liked the art style of Mew's book the best, but by far got the most enjoyment out of *Snorlax's Snack*. If you're going to pick up any *Pokemon* good for a younger fan, and you want something of real quality, check into the *Pokemon Tales*. - *shidoshi*

[1]*Shoujo - Japanese for "Girl's" comics or anime: things like Sailor Moon, Fushigi Yugi, etc.*

Manga Scene

Super Manga Blast!

$4.95 • Mixed • Dark Horse • 11+
128 pages • US Format • Anthology

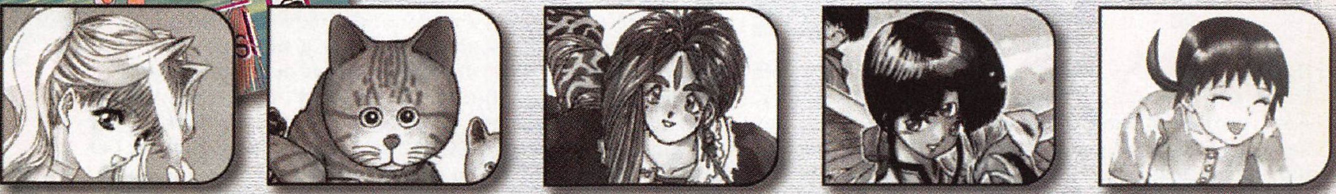
A-



For quite some time now, I've been singing the praises of Viz's *Animerica Extra*. First, I just love the idea from the beginning. Anything that gives US fans more of a chance to see a diverse selection of manga, and anything that gets us closer to Japan's "phonebook-sized manga" books is okay by me. Of course, Viz backs this up with a great selection of titles, so I'm always sure to pick up a copy each month. Other attempts have been made at similar projects; *MixxZine* gave it a try, and then lost its focus, and the more recent rebirth of *Mangazine* was great for those who like Antarctic Press titles. Well, now we have a TRUE challenger to *Animerica Extra*'s throne: a little title brought to us by Dark Horse Comics and Studio Proteus titled *Super Manga Blast!*.

If it ain't broke, don't fix it. That's the idea here, and *SMB!* feels no shame in taking a cue from *AE*: get together a handful of great black and white manga titles, slap them together into a 128-page book, and let the fans get a copy of it each month for $5. Hey, it seems to work, so why change the idea? As well, in their attempt to insure that I would be purchasing this new publication religiously, Studio Proteus has chosen as its first title, *Oh My Goddess!*. But aren't they already releasing *OMG!*, you ask? Ah, but these are the chapters that were skipped when the series first started! Yes, they are doing the right thing, and giving us the pieces that we originally missed. The only downfall of this is that there seems to be no plan to fix the graphic novels to include these "lost" chapters—a shame. Beyond Fujishima's tale of three sisters, we get the further adventures of *3x3 Eyes*, the strange yet hilarious feline cult classic *What's Michael?*, and two titles new to our shores, *Shadow Star* (by Mohiro Kitoh) and *Seraphic Feather* (art by Hiroyuki Utatane and story by Yo Morimoto). The verdict on these two are still out for me, as it's too early to make a true judgement call on either. Both seem to show promise, though, so I look forward to future issues.

Super Manga Blast! is another $5 I'll be out each month. *laughs* Honestly, this is a great publication, and is a must for all true anime fans. I'd pick this up just for the lost episodes of *Oh My Goddess!* alone, but *What's Michael?* is funny, *3x3 Eyes* is a fan favorite, and *Shadow Star* and *Seraphic Feather* may both turn into great titles over time. So long as Studio Proteus continues to pick fresh, new titles to include within the pages of *SMB!* over time, they'll have a great hit on their hands. *- shidoshi*

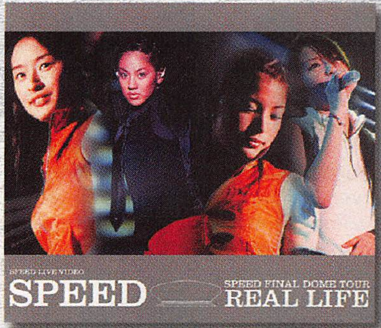


Goods Showcase

Speed: Real Life VCD

SPEED • Video CD • Toy Box
21 Tracks • 2 CD • Overseas Release

A-

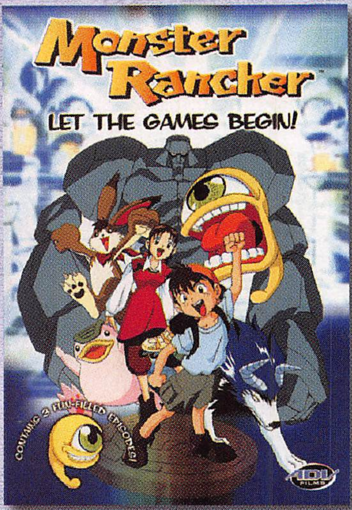


Due to the lack of room, I'm going to assume that (a) you know WHAT a Video CD (aka VCD) is, and (b) you know HOW to view one. If you don't, ask around. Anyhow, here we have *Speed Final Dome Tour: Real Life*, a concert video from SPEED's more recent—and final—music tour. Of course, any decent concert video is about one thing: the music. So what are SPEED fans given here? How about a great collection of SPEED hits, from Go! Go! Heaven to Long Way Home to White Love to my personal favorite Nettaiya. For anyone a bit disappointed by SPEED's most recent "change in sound," don't fret: this is the old-school SPEED that we all know and love. Of course, not only do we get to hear the music, but we also get in on the fun of SPEED's stage theatrics and dance moves. In addition to the music, clips are included of backstage going on before and after the concert, and as the show comes to a close, we see the members of SPEED breaking down in tears. Sure, it's sappy, but it's hard to watch knowing the girls are fully realizing that the band is quickly coming to an end. The *SFDT:RL* VCD is a great collectable for any SPEED fan looking for not only a concert video, but a collection of SPEED's biggest hits. Not only that, you can pick up the overseas version of this 2-disc VCD for a very reasonable price. The only downside to this VCD is that it made me realize that I'll never have the chance to see SPEED in concert in person. *- shidoshi*

Next Issue

Things get back to normal a bit more, and we dive into a host of new manga releases—including titles from the newest company now represented in the pages of AnimeFan, Dark Horse/Studio Proteus. Also, more J-pop to satisfy your listening needs. Now that SPEED is sadly broken up, AnimeFan will reveal its new "unofficial AF idol"! Plus, no doubt we'll have some coverage of the anime scene at E3 (what little there is).

Special Feature



Monster Rancher DVD

First there was *Pokemon*. *Digimon*, well, that was an offshoot of a popular fad that is not trying to cash in on another popular fad. Now comes *Monster Rancher*, the newest in the line of kid's shows, this one based off of the popular and quite interesting PlayStation breeding game.

I was really blown away by this DVD. I mean, wow, this looks good—high-end-Pioneer-release kind of good. I might actually say that this is ADV's best video quality DVD release yet. Not only does a digital transfer do this show justice, but *Monster Rancher* is also helped by an overall higher production value than it's Poke-rival. Per usual with these kinds of shows, DVD extras and fancy menus are non-existent. But how is the show itself? *MR* doesn't have the warm and fuzzy charm that *Pokemon* has, mostly due to the fact that its monsters just aren't as interesting or cute as Pikachu and company. This is also a fault of Digimon in my eyes, though, so it isn't just *MR*'s problem. However, *MR* is stronger and more mature in the way of storyline and characters. Whereas Pokemon is more of a guilty pleasure, I think some fans could get into *MR* more for the story. The tale of the golem actually had a lot of serious emotion to it, realizations of responsibility and guilt, things that aren't touched upon nearly as much in other more "fluffy" youth-targeted shows. Less likable monsters, better crafted tale—it's a toss up on which you value more. *- shidoshi*

Anime Drive-In



Sol Bianca: the Legacy - Vol 1

Adventure • OAV • Pioneer
13+ • 60 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | DVD

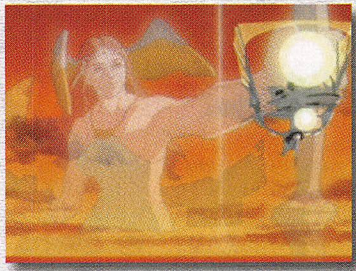
A-

Hundreds of years have passed since humans left Earth, and now our old home is but a distant memory. April, captain of the Sol Bianca, is determined to get her stolen Flintlock pistol back. But it seems that the Blue Comets are also interested in ownership of the gun, because it is an artifact of Earth. When the Sol Bianca and her crew get in their way, they are none too pleased. During the chaos, a young girl finds her way onto the spaceship, and claims to be a link to the Earth in her own way.

Let's be honest here: Think up a great idea for an anime, and it's already been done. So, the real test of quality is how an anime goes about telling a familiar storyline, and THAT is where *Sol Bianca: the Legacy* shines. Similar to *Cowboy BeBop*, to *Lain*, to *Photon*, it's style, flair, and attitude that sets this apart from a host of other titles. I mean, a group of female space pirates flying around looking for treasure; it could so easily be an example in mediocrity, but yet it is so much more. This is one of those titles that you can't help but fall in love with instantly. Much like *Lain*, this is a very "visual" anime. Computers are becoming a more important tool to the anime world, and like *Lain*, *SBtL* makes extensive use of it. The entire show is painted digitally, giving brighter, cleaner colors. As well, there is heavy use of CG throughout the show—some good, some questionable—and scene pans and movement are done digitally as well. Anime going digital is unquestionably a topic of controversy. My opinion? I don't want to see every anime get the digital treatment, but for "big budget" titles, I think the pros outweigh the cons. I'm still unsure about integrated CG, but digital painting is a GODSEND (especially for making better DVD transfers). All of this is backed up by a top-notch English dub. The voice actors are perfectly matched to the characters they are playing, and while I wouldn't call it a perfect dub, it certainly outclasses much of what is out there. Toss in possibly the single coolest DVD menu system yet created, and you've got one heck of an anime release on your hands.

Sol Bianca: the Legacy is AWESOME—a brilliant combination of wonderful characters, breathtaking visuals, a superb soundtrack mixed with room-shaking sound effects, and a storyline that takes what we have seen before and gives it a fresh new feel. I just hope and pray that this show has enough fuel in its tank, and isn't only a good first couple of episodes. I'm gushing, aren't I? Oh well, it's allowed sometimes. Seriously, I'm taken by this show, and I can't wait to get a hold of future volumes. *- shidoshi*









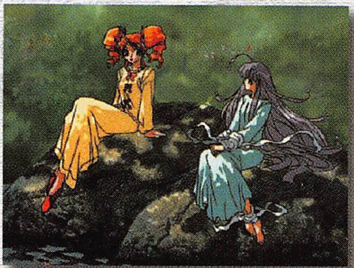
Anime Drive-In

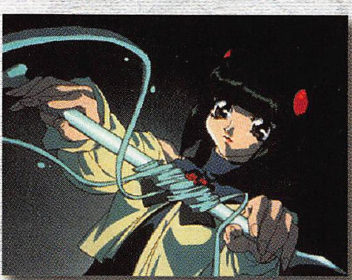


Shamanic Princess

Adventure • OAV • US Manga
15+ • 60 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | DVD

B-





Tiara, a young, yet powerful shaman, and her companion Japoro are asked by the elder to retrieve a stolen artifact of immense power. When Tiara arrives on the scene, however, it seems that her task won't be as easy as previously thought. First, she runs into Lena, the sorceress who was originally sent out on the mission. Yet Tiara did not know about Lena's task, and soon finds out the truth behind the artifact. Kagetsu took the mirror to try to save his sister Sarah, and Tiara is now forced to choose between sticking to her mission and fighting to save her old friend Sarah.

Tiara and her companion, Japoro, are both very interesting. Tiara, as much of a "cutie-girl" as she can be, actually has more to her than just ponytails and a silly outfit. Japoro, for the first time in memory, takes the adorable animal sidekick and actually does something interesting with it. Character designs for the rest of the cast are okay, though not outrageously interesting. While this may be a strange statement, I think the art style suffers due to eyes on characters that are JUST too big. Honestly. Maybe I'm simply getting used to the newer crop of anime that is getting more realistic with their eyes, but I just couldn't stop looking at Tiara's huge... eyes. Beyond that, most of the rest of this title is done quite well. That is, if you can give it a chance. *Shamanic Princess* is one of those shows that takes time to get into. The first episode did nothing for me, but by the second, there was a nice amount of depth and storyline to be seen. Once we are introduced to the characters, once the story is set up, and we get a chance to REALLY see what is going on, things get pretty absorbing. The set-up of the conflict between Tiara's duty and the feelings she has inside about what she should do gives the show more to work with.

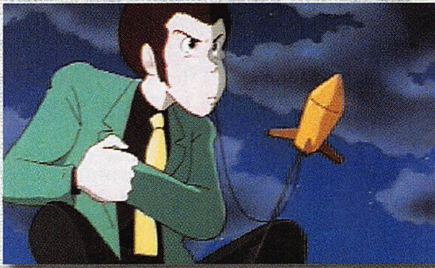
Still, I wouldn't proclaim *Shamanic Princess* an "A" title. Though it isn't outstanding in some of its areas, I'll still give it credit where it is due. As a dark, mystical drama, *SP* seems to be one of the better choices out there. *- shidoshi*

Lupin the Third—a world famous thief, lover, and seeker of fame and fortune. Lupin is a very famous and popular Japanese character created by the infamous manga artist Monkey Punch, based on the old French stories of a thief named Arsene Lupin. But with all of the *Lupin*-based movies released, what makes this one special? It was directed, and partially written, by anime and manga demi-god Hayao Miyazaki. Miyazaki knows how to put a story together, and with *Castle of Cagliostro*, he's crafted not only an outrageously funny, enjoyable, yet engrossing and edge of your seat thriller, but a movie that is just as enjoyable for viewers new to Lupin as it is for his long-time fans.

As the movie opens, we find Lupin and his faithful companion Jigen vowing to track down the source of large amount of counterfeit money. The trail leads to Cagliostro, a small European country. Something is afoot, however, as a young girl is chased by a carload of thugs, and Jigen wonders why Lupin is so familiar with the young girl and the ancient castle she was trying to escape. Lupin vows to help the damsel in distress, but finds himself in the middle of an international incident—one that even the master thief may not be able to escape from.

The *Castle of Cagliostro* is a timeless classic, and Manga deserves a lot of credit for breathing new life into it. Even if you already own the Streamline release, Manga's new (and non-cropped widescreen) transfer is reason enough to replace your old copy. They have put a lot of work into cleaning up the video, so the movie looks amazing, better than ever (especially on DVD). The new dub from Manga is great, with smart voice actor choices. It's one of those dubs that makes you appreciate the chance to sometimes watch anime in your native language. As well, compared to the quite-old Japanese audio track, the English dub tracks sounds worlds better. This is one of those titles that any true anime fan simply must have in their collection. This film is twenty years old, yet every aspect of it still shines with quality, and it is as enjoyable to watch today as it was when it was first released. Trust me, you absolutely cannot go wrong with this one. *- shidoshi*





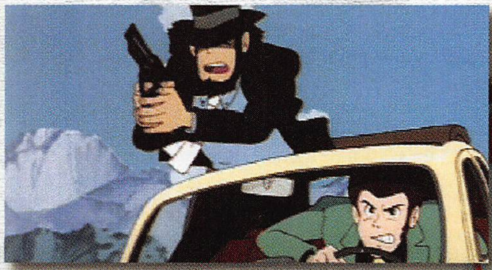
Castle of Cagliostro

Adventure • OAV • Manga Ent.
11+ • 60 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | DVD

A+







Anime Drive-In

Maze

Comedy • OAV • Software Sculptors
16+ • 60 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | DVD

B







Maze has a problem in life—she is forced to deal with a cruel hand that fate has dealt her. She is given the tasks of piloting a giant robot to defend the world from evil, protecting a young and slightly neurotic princess from harm, and dealing with having to turn into a sex-crazed guy at night. Sound like a lot of work? Yet Maze finds her troubles are just starting when the party she travels with comes across a small fairy with a sad tale. A tyrant king has stricken the land with despair, and the people are in need of a hero.

Okay, remember a while back when I talked about *Elf Princess Rane*? Well, consider *Maze* "Elf Princess Lite." This show is BIZARRE... not Rane bizarre, but still enough to make many a head scratch in confusion. Personally, I love these kinds of comedies, so I took to it like a duck to water. From the strange relationships Maze seems to get into, to the "How many anime genres were they trying to go after?" setup, to the whole *Quiz and Dragons* parody, to its surprisingly enjoyable cast of maniac characters, the wacky humor worked, and worked well quite often. My roommate, who saw a fansub of *Maze* a while back, assured me that the English dub made the situations of the show a bit more peculiar. I can't vouch for this, but I will say that some of the voices weren't the best choices to my ears, and there were some sloppy dub spots where lips were moving yet no voice could be heard. Anyhow, if shows like *Ranma 1/2* are a bit strange for you, this is certainly not your thing. Speaking of *Ranma*, *Maze* has the whole "person changes from boy to girl" thing going on—except here, the boy is a girl-crazed demon. It certainly plays off a bit more interesting than *Ranma*, as the male Maze, well, isn't all that likable of a fellow.



Past my forewarning of a bit of naughty humor contained in this show (if you prefer to steer clear of such things), *Maze* is a thoroughly enjoyable comedy that is completely insane and psychotic, yet is endearing in being such. Alas, just like *Rane*, this is but a short two episodes, so enjoy it while it lasts. - *shidoshi*

Special Feature

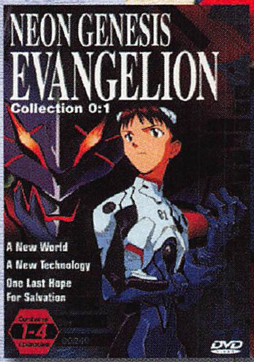


Evangelion DVD - Vol 1

Without question, this is probably one of the most eagerly-awaited anime DVD releases out there. It has taken a while to get here, but the first *Evangelion* DVD volume is now in our hands. So, how did it turn out?

Visually, *Eva* is nothing to write home about. The colors and art clarity are dull, boring, and look very unfitting of a show that ended up raking in the tons of cash that it did. I blame this more on the quality of the original Gainax transfers, and not anything on ADV's side. Sure, they could have spent time and money to spruce up the transfer, but that probably would have taken more resources than they have. I have heard excellent things about the Japanese DVD releases, but since I haven't seen them myself, though, I can't compare and contrast. I just wish the DVD looked like the screenshots on the back of the package. *heh* ADV gives us not two, but FOUR language tracks for *Eva* - English, Japanese, French, and Spanish. It's rather interesting to get the chance to compare voice actors from the four different dubs. In fact, I actually think the French dub works better for this show than the English—go figure.

There are two issues that I have with the DVD release of *Eva*. ADV decided to put the first portion of an episode on the same chapter as the show's intro. Thus, you'll have to fast forward through the intro to skip past it, instead of just jumping to the next chapter. A bit more serious, ADV has gone back and changed a number of background elements that were in Japanese into English. On one hand, I can understand why they would do this, and to be honest, ADV did a good job making the changes look natural. Still... the "purist anime fan" side of me says that while this kind of thing is okay with a "non-serious" show like *Pokemon*, it is an OUTCRY for a title like *Eva*. It's a really tough call, partially because I am scared of this becoming a trend.



Evangelion on DVD is certainly a great thing, if for no other reason than to help in the reduction of shelf space. Those out there expecting a digital rebirth for the show, however, may be disappointed. The DVD indeed looks better than the VHS release, but thanks to the digital format, the show's unimpressive image quality shines through. Then again, *Eva* was never really about impressing you in that regard, now was it? - *shidoshi*

AF News Service

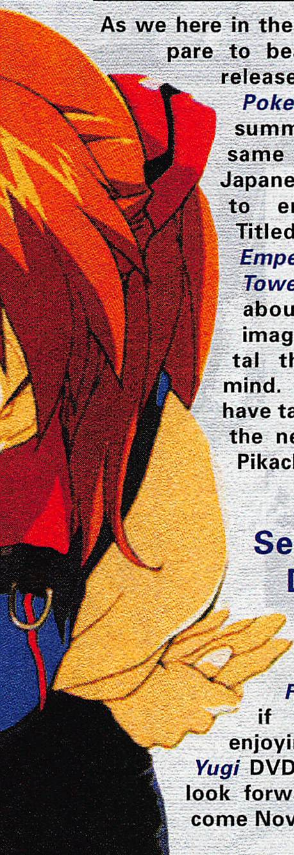
WB's New Stuff

The Warner Brothers network has a number of new animated shows starting up this fall, two of which will be of note to anime fans everywhere.

First is a whole new batch of *Pokemon* coming to Saturday mornings, titled *Pokemon GS*. *Pokemon GS* no doubt stands for "Pokemon Gold Silver," as the series will take our heroes to many new places and will bring in a whole slew of new *Pokemon* monsters—100 new ones, to be exact. The show will be following the release of this summer's *Pokemon the Movie 2000*, and will go along with the release of two new *Pokemon* Gameboy titles—Gold and Silver.

Next, Fridays get a bit more fun as Warner Brothers has picked up the US release rights from Nelvana for *Card Captor Sakura*. Titled *Card Captor* for its US release, *CCS* is the CLAMP anime adventure based around a Card Captor named Sakura, who must capture all of the magical creatures that she has mistakenly let loose. *Card Captor Sakura* will be part of the WB's new Friday afternoon line-up "Fraturday" (whatever that is supposed to mean), and will be joined by another run of *Pokemon GS*.

Third Pokemon Movie Info



As we here in the United States prepare to bear witness to the release of the second *Pokemon* movie this summer, at about the same time those lucky Japanese kids will be off to enjoy the THIRD. Titled *Pokemon: Emperor of the Crystal Tower*, the movie will be about a girl and the imaginary world of crystal that exists in her mind. The movie will also have tagging along with it the new *Pokemon* short Pikachu and Drowsy.

Second Fushigi DVD Set

Can't get enough of *Fushigi Yugi*? Well, if you're currently enjoying the first *Fushigi Yugi* DVD box set, you can look forward to the second come November 23rd.

Cinemax Gets Anime

Got cable? More specifically, got Cinemax? If so, then you'll want to be watching come this June. A recently announced agreement between Urban Vision and HBO (Cinemax's licensing arm) will be bringing you a number of anime titles to Cinemax midnights this June.

What will Cinemax be showing? A collection of Urban Vision's bigger titles, including *Vampire Hunter D*, *Wicked City*, and *Golgo 13: Queen Bee*. In addition, this showing on Cinemax will mark the release from Urban Vision of *Goku: Midnight Eye*. Directed by Yoshiaki Kawajiri (*Wicked City*, *BioHunter*, *Ninja Scroll*) and written by anime legend Buichi Terasawa (famous for *Space Adventure Cobra*), *Goku: Midnight Eye* will be shown first on Cinemax, and then will see home video release in July.

Fanboy Entertainment Announces Publishing Plans

Fanboy Entertainment recently announced the formation of a new publishing arm, Fanboy Comics. Being head up by US manga scene veteran C.B. Cebulski, Fanboy Comics gauged the market and the desire of fans by a few early releases. By the time you read this, this new division should be up and in full force.

Not surprisingly, Fanboy Comics' first project will be with manga artist Kia Asamiya. Fanboy and Asamiya's Studio Tron have produced several projects together over the past few months including *Dark Angel* prints and T-shirts as well as the wildly popular *Steam Detectives* Ling Ling/Lang Lang Lingerie Print Set. Fanboy Comics' first publishing project will be a *Steam Detectives* sketchbook entitled Pushing Pencils. Here's what Mr. Cebulski had to say about this new project:

"Pushing Pencils is a project that Mr. Asamiya is extremely excited about. He really enjoyed the Kia Asamiya Sketchbook that came out last year and wanted to take that idea and build upon it. He wants to do a series of longer, expanded sketchbooks for each of his individual manga and anime series," Cebulski explained. "Last month, Asamiya-sensei opened up his sketchbooks to us and we ran wild choosing images together. We were shooting for forty eight pages, but there are just too many gorgeous images and concepts that the fans just have to see! The *Steam Detectives Pushing Pencils* sketchbook will now clock in at sixty-four pages, packed with sketches and designs of the entire cast of *Steam Detectives* from the manga series, anime series and various toy lines. All your favorite characters will be there: Narutaki, Ling Ling, Lang Lang, Goriki, The Red Scorpion, The Phantom Knight, Shadow Bolt #1 and 2, and a few new surprises!"

According to Fanboy Comics and Mr. Cebulski, the Pushing Pencils project will not be just an ordinary sketchbook. Included in the book will be commentary on and examples of some of the techniques and styles that Mr. Asamiya has used when drawing manga. Throughout the book, he will try to offer insight that any budding artist will find useful. Pushing Pencils will be but the first in a series of Kia Asamiya sketchbooks. *Steam Detectives Pushing Pencils* will be a 64 page comic, available in May for $3.95. It will be followed in June by *Dark Angel Sword Strokes*, which will run 48 pages for $3.50 and include sketches and commentary on both the new and old Dark Angel manga series.

New US Dark Angel

While still on the topic of Kia Asamiya, a totally new *Dark Angel* title is being created specifically for the US market. Titles *Dark Angel: Phoenix Resurrection*, this new series will be in full color, and will officially be the first manga title ever drawn by Japanese artists specifically for an American publisher. Asamiya will be drawing the title on standard US-sized pages, and will also be creating it in the typical US left-to-right reading format.

Dark Angel: Phoenix Resurrection #1 will go on sale in May for $2.95 from Image Comics, and will be released in a bi-monthly format. It will feature two covers, both by Kia Asamiya, shipped in a 50/50 ratio.

Well, uhm... that's it. That's all I have to say. No more news than that. So why are you still reading? I mean, REALLY... what more do you expect from me? I'm just a man... JUST A MAN!!!! *runs off sobbing*

Hocus Pocus

codes, hints & strategies

Welcome to the pages of cheats, codes, and hints galore!!! Upon these leaves you will find all the assistance you'll need for the hottest games today. Not satisfied? Need help on another game? No problem! If you need codes or hints on any game, mail GameFan, or e-mail hocus-pocus@gamefan.com. Now, travel with thy controller in hand, to a place where cheaters prosper...

Code of the Month!

Tony Hawk

Gameplay Codes

During gameplay, pause the game, hold L Shift and enter the following commands:

All Tapes: C-Right, Left, Up, C-Up, C-Up, Right, Down, Up

10x Trick Multiplier: Down, Right, Up, Right, Up, Left, C-Left

Add Restart Points: C-Left, C-Right, C-Down, Up, Down

Fast Motion: Right, Up, Down, Down, Up, Down

Fast Tricks: C-Up, Left, C-Down, C-Down, Up, Down, Right





PlayStation

Armored Core Master of Arena

Fixed Camera View: To switch to a fixed camera view, press Circle + X + Start.

First-Person View: To switch to first-person view, press Triangle + Square + Start.

Army Men: Sarge's Heroes

Level select: At the main menu, hold Square + L1 + R1 and press Up, Down, Left, Right. If you entered the code correctly, you'll hear a sound.

All Weapons: During gameplay, pause the game and press Square, Circle, R1, and L1. Unpause the game, and you should have all weapons with infinite ammunition.

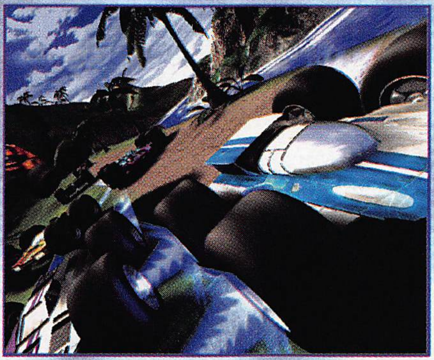
Medal of Honor

Level Passwords:

Level 1: INVASION
Level 2: BIGGRETA
Level 3: DASBOOT
Level 4: STUKA
Level 5: KOMET
Level 6: TWOSIXTWO
Level 7: MISSLEAGUE
Level 8: VICTORYDAY

Cheat Codes:

rapid fire: ICOSIDODEC
reflecting shots: GOBLUE
wire frame mode: TRACERON
American movie mode: SPRECHEN
Audie Murphy mode: MOSTMEDALS
Captain Dye mode: CAPTAINDYE
picture of a girl: COOLCHICK
picture of A.J.: AJRULES
picture of development team: DWIMOHTEAM
gallery of pictures: DWIGALLERY
infinite ammunition in multi-player mode: BADCOPSHOW
special power-ups in multi-player mode: DENNISMODE
Bismarck the Dog: WOOFWOOF
evil Colonel Muller: BIGFATMAN
Gunther: GUNTHER
Noah: BEACHBALL
Otto: HERRZOMBIE
Werner von Braun: ROCKETMAN
William Shakespeare: PAYBACK
Winston Churchill: FINESTHOUR
Wolfgang: HOODUP
velociraptor: SSPIELBERG
Mission 1 completed: RETTUNG
Mission 2 completed: ZERSTOREN
Mission 3 completed: BOOTSINKT
Mission 4 completed: SENFGAS
Mission 5 completed: SCHWERES
Mission 6 completed: SICHERUNG
Mission 7 completed: EINSICKERN
Mission 8 completed: GESAMTHEIT

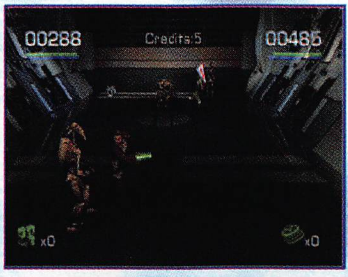


Rollcage Stage 2

Password Codes

Enter each of the following codes at the password screen:

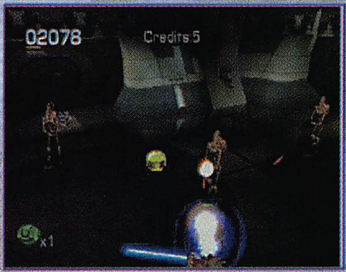
LOOK.OUT!.ITS.ANDY.GREEN - mega speed
I.AM.THE.MIRROR.MAN,.OOOOOOOOOO! - Mirror mode
PURSUIT,.A.SUIT.MADE.FROM.CATS - Pursuit mode
IM.OBVIOUSLY.SICK.AS.A.PARROT - Rubble Soccer mode
HERE.TODAY,.GONE,.LATE.AFTERNOON - Survivor mode
YOU.HAVE.A.LOTA.EXPLODING.TO.DO - all combat tracks
NOW.THAT'S.WHAT.I.CALL.RACING.147 - all tracks
WHEELS,.METAL,.ITS.....THE.BIN! - all cars
WLL.IF.IT.AINT.THEM.PESKY.KIDS - ATD ghost cars
IS.IT.COLD.IN.HERE.OR.IS.IT.JUST.ME? - Demolition mode
I.WANT.IT.ALL.AND.I.WANT.IT.NOW! - all cheats



Star Wars: Episode I Jedi Power Battles

Play as Captain Panaka: Complete the game with Plo Koon. Then, at the character selection screen, highlight Plo Koon and press Select. Captain Panaka will now be selectable.

Play as Queen Amidala: Complete the game with Obi-Wan Kenobi. Then, at the character selection screen, highlight Obi-Wan Kenobi and press Select. Queen Amidala will now be available.



Play as Darth Maul: Complete the game with Qui-Gon Jinn and start a new game. Then, at the character selection screen, highlight Qui-Gon Jinn and press Select. Darth Maul's portrait will replace Qui-Gon Jinn, and Darth Maul will become selectable.



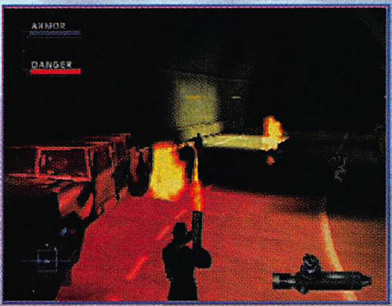
Syphon Filter 2

Expert mode: At the title screen, highlight "One Player," then hold Up + L1 + R2 + Select + Circle + X + Square. Good luck, you'll be playing in Expert mode.

Superagent mode: Pause the game and highlight "Weaponry." Then, hold L2 + Select + Circle + Square + X simultaneously. If you entered the code correctly, you'll hear a sound. Then, enter the options screen and choose the "Cheats" selection.

Movie theater: During gameplay, pause the game and highlight the "Briefing" option. Then, press and hold Right + L1 + R2 + Circle + X. A high-pitched sound should confirm the code. Now go to the "Cheats" section in Options, and you should see two new features to view all Disc 1 and Disc 2 movies.

Skip to end of level: During gameplay, pause the game, highlight the "Map" option, then hold Right + L2 + R2 + Circle + Square + X. Now, enter the options screen and choose the new "Cheats" option.



Triple Play 2001

EA Dream Team: To get the EA Sports Dream Team, select the "Single Game" option from the main menu. Then, at the team selection screen, press Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right. The phrase "Triple Play Baseball" will be spoken to confirm correct code entry.

WWF Smackdown

Unlock more moves: When creating your wrestler, set each skill to the highest setting. This will unlock more moves for you to edit your wrestler with.

Bonus wrestlers

Go into Season mode, and as you finish each year, the following new wrestlers will be unlocked:

Ivory: 1 year
Prince Albert: 2 years
Jacqueline: 3 years
Viscera: 4 years
Mideon: 6 years
Gerald Brisco: 7 years
Pat Patterson: 8 years

Nintendo 64

1080° Snowboarding

Trick list cheat

Panda Man: Enter any initials on every single Records screen for the first, second and third places. After doing so, go to the Rider Select screen, highlight Rob Haywood and press A to bring up his statistics. Hold the C-Right and press A to choose him, then let go of C-Right.

Ice Man: To play as Ice Man, win Match Race mode on the Expert level and top all of the EAD scores in Trick Attack and Time Attack modes. Press C-Left and then A while choosing Akari Hayami.

Gold Ice Man: Gold Ice Man is the game's best racer! To get the 24-karat boarder, select Ice Man, then conquer Match Race on the Expert level. Press C-up, then A while choosing Kensuke Kimachi.

Penguin Board: To ride the Penguin board, perform every trick in the game under Training mode; it's best to stick with Rob Haywood or Panda Man. After you've done all the tricks, press the C buttons A when you select any character's default board.

All-Star Baseball 2001

Cheat codes

Enter the following codes at the cheat menu:

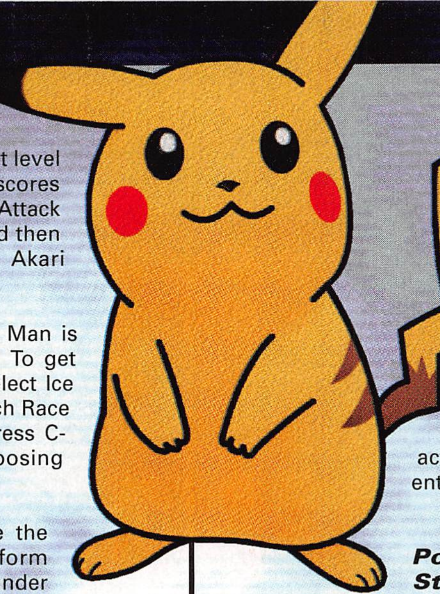
big baseball: BCHBLKTPTY
baseball trails: WLDWLDWST
blackout mode: WTOTL
blurred visuals: MYEYES
have players after outs: FLYAWAY
small players: TOMTHUMB

Cyber Tiger

Extra characters

Play as an alien: Choose any mode and select any character. Now, choose to edit your character's name and enter "Ufo."

Play as Kimmi: Choose any mode and select any character. Now choose, to edit your character's name and enter "Rapper."



Play as Starr: Choose any mode and select any character. Now, choose to edit your character's name and enter "Retro."

Pokémon Stadium

Bonus stickers: Complete R-1 and R-2 modes and beat Mewtwo twice. Now, enter the gallery screen, hold L + R and highlight the "Print" option. Keep holding the buttons until "Print" changes to "Bonus" to unlock sixteen more stickers.

Extra cool stuff

Surfing Pikachu: Finish the game to get the surfing Pikachu (with blue eyes).

Game Boy Tower: To get into the GB Tower, complete the Prime Cup and the Poké Cup. Now, you should be able to play your Pokémon game for Game Boy on the Nintendo 64 in the GB Tower.

Extra damage: After performing a fighting move, hold A when the move description appears.

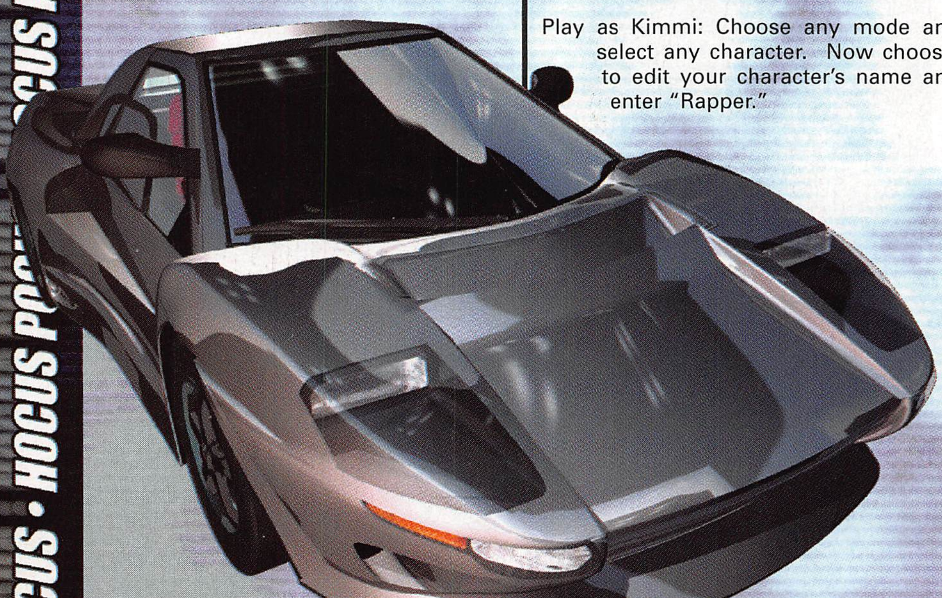
Black Pokémon: At the game title screen, quickly press Up, Up, Up, Right, Up, Left and Down. Directly after, you should hear a loud 'pika, pika.' Now, all of your Pokémon are black or darker than normal.

All Pokémon: If you win the Hard tournament, you can get all the Pokémon (including all pokégods).

Ridge Racer 64

Ghost car: Finish 99 laps in free run during Time Attack mode on any track.

Galaga '88 mini-game: Complete the







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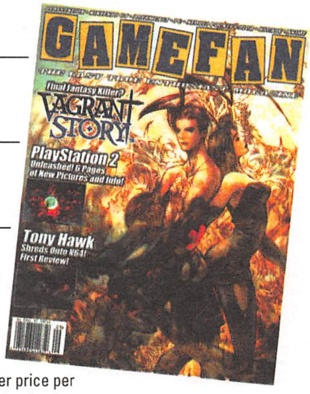
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Ridge Racer Extreme Extra race in first place to access the classic *Galaga '88* game.

Hidden golf cart: To get the super-fast golf cart, start a game in Grand Prix mode and select the first track. As the race begins, drive forward a few seconds, then turn around so you're going the wrong way. Build up enough speed (to at least 4th gear) to go through the wall, and you'll be racing a reverse track. Finish first, and you'll get the golf caddy car.



Rainbow Six

All mission passwords: Enter VZRFT-MQ2G8SQ to unlock all recruit-level missions. Enter FZJFTMR2G8RQ to unlock all veteran-level missions. Make sure you don't have a Memory Pak in your controller.



Rocket: Robot On Wheels

Super grapple ray: During gameplay, pause the game and press R Shift, R Shift, Right, Up, Z, Left, R, Z, Left, Up. A confirmation tone should sound if you input the code correctly. The range of the grapple ray should be dramatically increased.

Super grab field: During gameplay, pause the game and press Down, Left, Right, Z, Down, Right, Down, Down, Down, Left. Rocket will now be able to pick up very large objects that he normally wouldn't be able to pick up.

SUPER SMASH BROS.

All vehicles: During gameplay, pause the game and press Up, Down, Z, R, Left, Up, Down, Left, Down, Down. A confirmation tone should sound if you input the code correctly.

Heavier Rocket: During gameplay, pause the game and press Up, Right, Right, R, Right, R, Z, R, R, Up (use the digital pad for the directional commands). A confirmation tone should sound if you input the code correctly.

Super speed: During gameplay, pause the game and press Z, Right, Down, Up, Down, R, Up, Down, Left, Up (use the digital pad for the directional commands). A confirmation tone should sound if you input the code correctly.

Low friction: During gameplay, pause the game and press Up, R, R, Left, Z, Z, Down, Left, Up, Right (use the digital pad for the directional commands). A confirmation tone should sound if you input the code correctly.

Low gravity: During gameplay, pause the game and press Z, R, Z, R, Down, R, R, Right, Right, R (use the digital pad for the directional commands). A confirmation tone should sound if you input the code correctly.

Monopoly 64

Play as Mr. Potato Head: Name the moneybag token "Potato" to play as everyone's favorite spud.

Quake 2

Cool colors: Select "Single" on the Mode screen and "Load" on the Game Start screen. When asked to create a game note on the Controller Pak, select "not to use" and then enter "S3TCOOLCOLORS???." An alternate color palette will appear in the game.

Infinite Shots: Select "Single" on the Mode screen and "Load" on the Game Start screen. When asked to create a game note on the Controller Pak, select "not to use" and then enter "S3T1NF1N1T3SHOTS." You'll have unlimited ammo in multi-player mode.

Super Smash Bros.

Sound test: Beat all the Bonus Practice 2 mode, and you'll reach the sound test screen in the Data section.

Borrow a life (multi-player): In multi-player mode, if you die and want to borrow a life from a teammate that has a extra life, press A + B + Z + Start.

Play as Ness: To play as Ness, beat the one-player mode with any character, the number of starting lives set to "3" and the difficulty set to "Normal." You must beat the game without continuing.

Play as Luigi: To play as Luigi, pass the Bonus Practice 1 mode with at least eight main characters. When Luigi challenges you, defeat him and he's yours.

Play as Jigglypuff: If you want to get the Pokémon Jigglypuff, all you have to do is beat the game and then you'll face him in battle. If you beat Jigglypuff, you'll be able to use him in the game.

Play as Captain Falcon: To play as Captain Falcon, you must beat the game on any difficulty in UNDER 20 MINUTES. After that, Captain Falcon will challenge you. Once you beat him, you'll be able to select Captain Falcon as a playable character.

Change Outfits: You can change your character's outfits by tapping the four C Buttons at the character select screen. Some costume changes are limited to colors, but characters like Pikachu are also available with a hat.

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater

Gameplay Codes

During gameplay, pause the game, hold L Shift and enter the following commands:

All Tapes: C-Right, Left, Up, C-Up, C-Up, Right, Down, Up



10x Trick Multiplier: Down, Right, Up, Right, Up, Left, C-Left
Add Restart Points: C-Left, C-Right, C-Down, Up, Down
Fast Motion: Right, Up, Down, Down, Up, Down
Fast Tricks: C-Up, Left, C-Down, C-Down, Up, Down, Right

Dreamcast

MDK 2

Farting Doc: During gameplay as Doctor Hawkins, press Left and Right triggers, Left on the D-Pad and A simultaneously. Doc will release some gas for your displeasure.

Slow Motion Mode: While playing as Max, hold Fire and press Up, Up, Up, Up.

Re-Volt

All Cars: For all cars, enter "CARTOON" as your name.

All Tracks: For all tracks, enter "TRACTION" as your name.

Star Wars: Episode I Racer

Extra Racers

Finish each of the following races in first place to unlock the extra racers:

Amateur

Aquilaris Classic: Clegg Holdfast
Beedos Wild Ride: Aldar Beedo
Mon Gazza Speedway: Teemto Pagalies
Spice Mine Run: Mars Guo
Vengeance: Fud Sang

Semi-Pro

Baroo Coast: Neva Kee
Bumpy's Breakers: Ark Bumpy Roose
Howler Gorge: Ratts Tyerell
Scrappers Run: Wan Sandage
Sunken City: Bullseye Navior
Zugga Challenge: Boles Roor

Galactic

Andobi Mountain Run: Mawhonic
Boonta Classic: Sebulba
Executioner: Toy Dampner

Invitational

AP Centrum: Slide Paramita
Abyss: Bozzie Baranta
Inferno: Ben Quadinaros



Sword of the Berserk Gut's Rage

Puck's mini-game: Finish the game on the easy difficulty setting.

Battle Arena mode: Finish the game on the normal difficulty setting.

No limit mode: Finish the game on the hard difficulty setting.



Toy Commander

99 Heavy Ammo: Pause the game, then hold L and press A, B, X, Y, B, A. If you entered the code correctly, you'll hear a tone.

All Rooms Available: Pause the game, then hold L and press A, Y, X, B, Y, X. If you entered the code correctly, you'll hear a tone.

Artwork: If you have a PC or a Mac, you can put the Toy Commander disk in your CD-ROM drive and open it up. There will be icons, screen shots, logos and artwork.

Extra multi-player levels: Play through each stage in each level (e.g., beat all stages in the first level) in the single-player mode to access a new multi-player stage.
Fix Toy: Pause the game, then hold L and press A, X, B, Y, A, Y. If you entered the code correctly, you'll hear a tone.

Health recharge: If you turn on the sink, go down to the drain and let the water fall on you, your health will recharge.

Hidden Single-player Level: If you beat every level of the game, a hidden area will appear. This area is shown as a tree in the backyard. In this level, you race through the garden as a snail. If you beat the hidden mission, you'll get an unlimited number of powerful missiles for use against bosses (and only bosses).

Launch Credits: At the main menu, press A, A, A, B, B, B.

Lights Out: To turn the lights in a level out, find the light switch on the wall and touch it with an airborne vehicle (plane or helicopter) or shoot it.

Max Fuel: While playing a mission that uses only one vehicle, press B, Y, A, X, B, X.

Railroad rabble shortcut: In this level, you have to guide the train on the track. The first thing you should do is get the rocket ammo on top of the hill. Second, destroy all of the bad guys under the cabinet. Third, hit only the first switch on the track. Finally, follow the trail and shoot at anyone who shoots at the train. If you do all of this quickly enough, you'll beat the boss's record.

Skip to last stage: Pause the game and hold L. Then press R, A, X, B, Y, Y, A. If you entered the code correctly, you'll hear a tone.

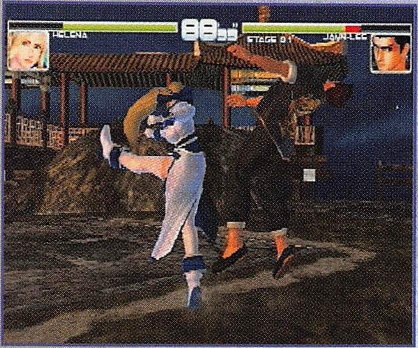
Upgrade Machine Guns: Pause the game, then hold L and press B, A, Y, X, A, B. If you entered the code correctly, you'll hear a tone.

Upgrade Weapons: Pause the game, then hold L and press X, A, Y, B, A, X. If you entered the code correctly, you'll hear a tone.

Dead or Alive 2

3D Character Select: To change the characters to 3D at the character select screen (you can also see which costume they're





wearing), simply turn off the Quick Selector in the Versus mode options.

Arial Garden (nighttime): To reach the cool Firefly level, select Arial Garden in Versus mode using the right trigger.

Bouncing Breasts: In the options menu, sub-menu "other," the age you enter determines how bouncy the gals are. The older they are, the bouncier they get.

After-battle taunt camera zoom: To zoom the camera in on after-battle taunts, just press B while your character taunts after the replay. NOTE: This doesn't work for tag team taunts.

Clean pause screen: Press X + Y after pausing the game for a clear pause screen.

Hidden Cut-Scene: To view the hidden cut-scene, you must first play as Ayane in Story mode. When you reach the battle against Kasumi, you must knock her out in the ice pit, and she must land approximately ten feet away from you. If you do this correctly, you'll see the fireball cut-scene from the intro movie.

Hidden Wallpaper on disc: Put the DOA2 disc into your CD-ROM drive on your computer to find wallpaper images in the Bonus directory.

Matrix-style freeze frame: Hold B, Y and Up-Right on the analog stick during a replay. The camera should spin around the fighters who are stuck in mid-combat.

Rayman2: The Great Escape

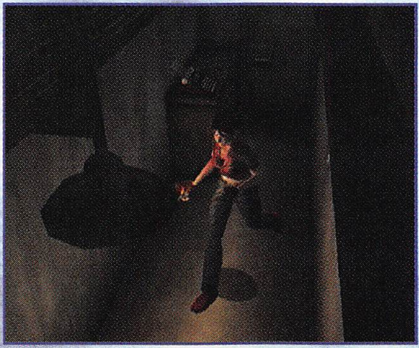
Clear pause screen: Press X + Y after pausing the game for a clear pause screen.

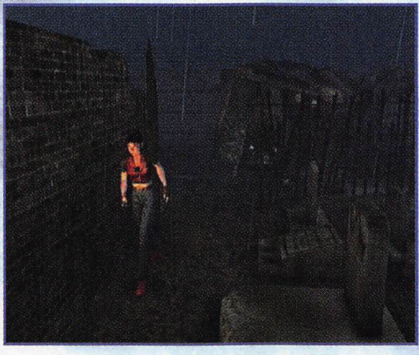
Golbox Village: To get to Golbox Village, you must first get the power-up to swing from purple lums. Then, go back to the first level and go to the part where you have to climb (the one with the two walls close together). When you get up, swing by the lum, and you can get to the village. Here, you place the crystals, which will unlock cool stuff like a four-player mini-game!

Resident Evil: Code Veronica

Battle Mode: Successfully complete the game under any difficult setting. Then, save the game, and "Battle Mode" will be on the title screen.

Linear Launcher: Get an "A" ranking with the two Claires, Steve, Chris and Wesker in the Battle mode to unlock the Linear Launcher. Once you get it, it will automatically appear in your inventory when





you begin the Battle mode again.
Rocket Launcher: Complete the main game with an "A" ranking, without using the first aid spray, without saving and without retrying to earn the rocket launcher. Then, quickly save Steve from the Luger room, give the medicine to your jailer Rodrigo and finish in under four hours, thirty minutes. Then, when you begin another game, the launcher will be available from the first item box you run across.

Unlock Albert Wesker: Complete the Battle mode with Chris Redfield to unlock Albert Wesker.

Unlock Steve in Battle Game: Unlock Steve in Battle mode by solving a puzzle in the main game. In the underground Save Room in Chris' walkthrough, complete the drawer puzzle in the corner. Grab the gold Luger to unlock Mr. Burnside.

Tee Off Golf

Gain new stuff quickly: After playing through fifteen holes of the last course in World mode, make sure to save it (you must be winning, of course). Then, after you've finished the game in first place, waited through the credits and received your new ball, club and player, simply reload the saved game and play the last three holes (again, stay in first place) and get an all new ball, club and player.

Unlock all clubs: Beat the game on difficulty level 1.

Game Boy

Contra: The Alien Wars

Level Skip: At the password screen, enter "H 2 F 2." Now, during gameplay, if you want to skip a level, just press the Start button.

R-Type

Etch-A-Sketch: When the high score screen comes up, press diagonally left/down, A and B simultaneously. A program called "De Souza Editor" will appear. Press Start, and a blank screen with a cursor in the upper left will appear. This is essentially an Etch-A-Sketch program.

Rayman

All Powers: During gameplay, pause the game and press Right, Left, Up, Down, A, Up, Up, Down, B, Right, Right, Left, Left, A.

99 Lives: During gameplay, pause the game and hit A, Right, B, Up, A, Left, B, Down, A, Right, B, Up, A, Left, B.

Samurai Shodown

Extra Fighters: During the intro, when the samurai begins cutting down trees, press Select four times. You should hear a confirmation sound if you input the code correctly. Now, start a game, and you should have three extra fighters.

Ninja Gaiden Shadow

Sound Test: At the title screen, hold right, B and A and press Start.

Bionic Commando Elite Forces

Return to the Chopper: During gameplay, hold Select, then press A and B simultaneously to return to your chopper. This will allow you to switch to a different item if necessary.

Ghost N Goblins

Enter the following passwords for the desired level:

Quest 1:
Level 2: L Heart K Heart Heart Heart B L
Level 3: Q Zero M Heart Heart Heart 1 H
Level 4: P S 5 Heart 7 Heart B 4
Level 5: T J R Heart 7 Heart 2 Heart
Level 6: J J T Heart 7 Heart 7 L
Final Boss: K D C Heart H Heart S H

Quest 2:
Level 1: G N Heart Heart K 0 0 H
Level 2: G N 1 Heart 5 0 8 J
Level 3: X 4 3 Heart 5 0 M R
Level 4: L S 5 Heart 9 1 1 4
Level 5: D N 7 Heart 9 3 Heart 7
Level 6: X N 9 Heart 9 3 3 3
Final Boss: N 8 C Heart K 4 0 N

A Bug's Life

Level Passwords:
Level 01: 9LKK
Level 02: BL26
Level 03: 5P9K
Level 04: 6652
Level 05: BKK2
Level 06: 2PLB
Level 07: 6562
Level 08: L59B

Bonus level: Enter BL26 as a password.

Turok 2: Seeds of Evil

All weapons: Enter "DLVTRKBWPS" as a password.
Infinite energy: Enter "DLVTRKBNRG" as a password.
Infinite lives: Enter "DLVTRKBLVS" as a password.

Operation C

Extra lives: On the title screen, press Up, Up, Up, Up, Down, Down, Down, Down, Left, Left, Left, Left, Right, Right, Right, Right, A, B and Start to begin with ten lives.

Stage Select: On the title screen, press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, B, A, B, A and Start.

Imports

Ridge Racer V

Mess with the intro sequence: By pressing the L1 and R1 buttons, you can cycle back and forth through three different effects for the portion of the intro sequence that uses the in-game graphics. Press R1 once, and the graphics change to black and white. Press R1 a second time, and the graphics will take on a yellow tint. Press the R1 button a third time, and you'll add a blur effect that'll eliminate the jaggies in the graphics. Press L1 and backtrack through the various effects.

Street Fighter EX 3 (PS2)



Extra Characters
To get the following extra characters, you must beat Original mode the following number of times for each respective character without continuing
Sagat: once
Vega: twice
Garuda: three times
Shadow Geist: four times
Kairi: five times
Pullum: six times
Area: seven times
Darun: eight times
Vulcano: nine times

Tekken Tag Tournament

Gallery mode: Unlock Devil to access the Gallery mode.
Secret Characters: Beat the game to unlock each secret character, which can be opened in this order:
Kunimitsu
Bruce Irvin
Jack-2
Lee Chaolan
Wang Jinrey
Roger & Alex
Kuma & Panda
Kazuya Mishima
Ogre
True Ogre
Prototype Jack
Mokujin & Tetsujin
Devil and Angel
Unknown
Tekken Bowl Mode: Unlock Ogre to access Tekken Bowl mode.



Jukebox: Score over 200 in Tekken Bowl to access the Jukebox.

Theater mode: Beat the game one time to unlock the Theater mode.

Marvel Vs. Capcom 2 New Age of Heroes

Blow Up Tyrant: In order for this trick to work, you'll need your Super Meter to be at least at Level 2, and one of your characters must be Jill. Now, during gameplay, play as Jill and connect with her Tyrant Super attack. When Tyrant finishes attacking, he'll pose for a few seconds. Before he jumps away, perform Jill's Bazooka Super; you'll blow Tyrant up and hit your opponent at the same time!



GameShark Codes

PlayStation

Ace Combat 3 Electrosphere

Enable All Planes
800be6680101
800be66a0101
800be66c0101
800be66e0101
800be6700101
800be6720101
800be6740101
800be6760101
800be6780101
800be67a0101
800be67c0101

Army Men Sarge's Heroes

Infinite Health
e006dba80028
3010781400ff
8006dba80000
800746440000
e006d3ac0028
3010ceb400ff

Infinite Timer (boot camp)
d00df6b80373
800df6b80367

Bubble Bobble

Infinite Lives P1
80176AC80005
80176ACC0100
30176AE00000

Infinite Lives P2
80176A980003
80176A9C0100
30176AB00000

Infinite Credits
80176B300009

P1 Special of The Bobble
80176ACE0129

P1 Special of The Bobble in Fire
80176ACE011F

P2 Special of The Bobble
80176A9E0129

P2 Special of The Bobble in Fire
80176A9E011F

Deception 3 Dark Delusion

Infinite Health
800c33860190

Infinite Ark
800b8dacffff

Ceiling Trap, No Load Time
800c0d540000
800c0de80000

Floor Trap, No Load Time
800c0e7c0000

All Emblems
800bad2e03ff

All Free Training Maps
800c35b401ff

All Rings
800bad30007f

Infinite Dreak
800b8da4e0ff
800b8da605f5

Trap License Complete
300b8db70007

Die Hard Trilogy 2

Infinite Health All Modes
800fa28401f4
d0081e840067
800fa87001f4
d0081e84007b
80101c9401f4

Infinite Ammo First-Person Mode
d00fa8700067
800fa8c00063
d00fa8700067
800fa8c40063
d00fa8700067
800fa8c80063

Infinite Ammo Third-Person Mode
d00fa870007b
80101d140063
d00fa870007b
80101d080063
d00fa870007b
80101cc80063
d00fa870007b
80101cb80062

Infinite Frag Grenades First-Person Mode
d00fa8700067
800fa8e00005

Infinite Grenades Third-Person Mode
d00fa870007b
80101d100005
d00fa870007b
80101d040005
d00fa870007b
80101d000007
d00fa870007b
80101d0c0005
d00fa870007b
80101cc40005

Infinite Time, Driving Mode
d0081e84006d
800fc038647c

Infinite Nitros, Driving Mode
d0081e84006d
800fa2901388

Einhänder

Infinite Lives
800813C40003

Invincible
8008571800A5

Infinite Special Weapon Ammo
80084832000F
80084834000F

Score Multiplier Always At 40
800813260028

Endymion MK. II

Push Triangle Button To Get Weapon
D0083E2C0010
800857340?00

Astrea

Infinite Top Pod Ammo [Note 1]
80084982000F

Have Unknown Fighter Type I [Note 2]
D0083E2C0010
800814340003

Have Unknown Fighter Type II [Note 2]
D0083E2C0010
800814340004

Enable Gallery With All Pictures
801FEC9CFFFF
801FEC9EFFFF

Invincible Weapons Top Ammo Pod Position
8008483003C0
80084B6203C0

Invincible Weapons Bottom Ammo Pod Position
8008498003C0
80084CB203C0

Unknown Fighter Type I Max Guns
8008573A0013

Hot Shots Golf 2

Unlock All Characters
d2046b5effff

Unlock All Characters
80046b5effff

P1 Hole in One, Hole 1
d3046a660001
80046a660001

P1 Hole in One, Hole 2
d3046a680001
80046a680001

P1 Hole in One, Hole 3
d3046a6a0001
80046a6a0001

P1 Hole in One, Hole 4
d3046a6c0001
80046a6c0001

P1 Hole in One, Hole 5
d3046a6e0001
80046a6e0001

P1 Hole in One, Hole 6
d3046a700001
80046a700001

P1 Hole in One, Hole 7
d3046a720001
80046a720001

P1 Hole in One, Hole 8
d3046a740001
80046a740001

P1 Hole in One, Hole 9
d3046a760001
80046a760001

P1 Hole in One, Hole 10
d3046a780001
80046a780001

P1 Hole in One, Hole 11
d3046a7a0001
80046a7a0001

P1 Hole in One, Hole 12
d3046a7c0001
80046a7c0001

P1 Hole in One, Hole 13
d3046a7e0001
80046a7e0001

P1 Hole in One, Hole 14
d3046a800001
80046a800001

P1 Hole in One, Hole 15
d3046a820001
80046a820001

P1 Hole in One, Hole 16
d3046a840001
80046a840001

P1 Hole in One, Hole 17
d3046a860001
80046a860001

P1 Hole in One, Hole 18
d3046a880001
80046a880001

P2 Hole in One, Hole 1
d3046a8c0001
80046a8c0001

P2 Hole in One, Hole 2
d3046a8e0001
80046a8e0001

P2 Hole in One, Hole 3
d3046a900001
80046a900001

P2 Hole in One, Hole 4
d3046a920001
80046a920001

P2 Hole in One, Hole 5
d3046a940001
80046a940001

P2 Hole in One, Hole 6
d3046a960001
80046a960001

P2 Hole in One, Hole 7
d3046a980001
80046a980001

P2 Hole in One, Hole 8
d3046a9a0001
80046a9a0001

P2 Hole in One, Hole 9
d3046a9c0001
80046a9c0001

P2 Hole in One, Hole 10
d3046a9e0001
80046a9e0001

P2 Hole in One, Hole 11
d3046aa00001
80046aa00001

P2 Hole in One, Hole 12
d3046aa20001
80046aa20001

P2 Hole in One, Hole 13
d3046aa40001
80046aa40001

P2 Hole in One, Hole 14
d3046aa60001
80046aa60001

P2 Hole in One, Hole 15
d3046aa80001
80046aa80001

P2 Hole in One, Hole 16
d3046aaa0001
80046aaa0001

P2 Hole in One, Hole 17
d3046aac0001
80046aac0001

P2 Hole in One, Hole 18
d3046aae0001
80046aae0001

P1 Stroke Play Total -327
d1046b5efc19
80046b5efc19

P1 Wins Match Play
d1046b5e0001
80046b5e0001

P2 Wins Match Play
d1046b5effff
80046b5effff

Unlock Semi-Pro
d20d364e0001
800d364e0001

Unlock Pro
d20d364e0002
800d364e0002

Unlock Tour Pro
d20d364e0003
800d364e0003

Unlock Top Pro
d20d364e0004
800d364e0004

Max Spring Points Amateur/Top Pro
80046bd0270f
80046bd2270f

Max Spring Points Pro
80046bd4270f

Max Spring Points Tour Pro
80046bd6270f

Max Summer Points Amateur/Top Pro
80046bd8270f

Max Summer Points Semi-Pro
80046bda270f

Max Summer Points Pro
80046bdc270f

Max Summer Points Tour Pro
80046bde270f

Max Fall Points Amateur/Top Pro
80046be0270f
80046be2270f

Max Fall Points Pro
80046be4270f

Max Fall Points Tour Pro
80046be6270f

Max Winter Points Amateur/Top Pro
80046be8270

Max Winter Points Semi-Pro
80046bea270f

Max Winter Points Pro
80046bec270f

Max Winter Points Tour Pro
80046bee270f

R1/R2/L1/L2 To End Tournament
d004ad08000f
8004666c0012

Rally Cross

Unlock All Courses, Course Variations, Difficulty Levels, and 20 Vehicles
800564560114

Freeze Timer
800659C00000

Freeze Lap Timer
800659C40000

Always on Lap Modifier (01-05)
800659BA00??

Always Place Modifier (01-04)
800B43CA00??

Start on Lap Modifier (02-05)
D00659BA0001
800659BA00??

Extra Cars
800552780014

Fat Tire Mode
300608AD0001

No Wheels
300608AE0001

No Body
300608AF0001

Rally Cross 2

Extra Tracks And Cars
D0059BF80000
80059BFE0003

Always Place 1st
800721C00001

One Lap To Race
800606BE0104

Low Gravity
D005A0240000
8005A0280001

Sammy Sosa Softball Slam

Never Strike Out (Both Teams)
800afd440000

First Team has 99 Runs
800afd500063

First Team has 99 Hits
800b21b40063

Second Team has 99 Runs
800afdb00063
800afd4c0063

Second Team has 99 Hits
800afdb40063

Samurai Shodown Warrior's Rage

Infinite Health P1
800DD2580100

25% Health P1
D00DD2580100
800DD2580040

50% Health P1
D00DD2580100
800DD2580080

75% Health P1
D00DD2580100
800DD25800C0

1-Hit Death P1
D00DD2580100
800DD2580001

No Health P1
800DD2580000

Infinite Pow P1
300DD26400FF

No Pow P1
300DD2640000

Infinite Health P2
800DD2900100

25% Health P2
D00DD2900100
800DD2900040

50% Health P2
D00DD2900100
800DD2900080

75% Health P2
D00DD2900100
800DD29000C0

1-Hit Death P2
D00DD2900100
800DD2900001

No Health P2
800DD2900000

Infinite Pow P2
300DD29C00FF

No Pow P2
300DD29C0000

Infinite Top Time
3007E394003B

Infinite Bottom Time
8007E39C00B4

Infinite Ability Points (Attack Mode)
300B4AA400FF

Max Ability Points (Attack Mode)
300B4AA200FF

Infinite Trading Cards (Gallery Mode)
800BA0500063

Spyro 2 Ripto's Rage

Infinite Lives
8006712c0063

Infinite Health
8006a2480003

Have Swim/Dive Learned
800646820001

Have Climb Learned
800646860001

Have Headbash Learned
8006468a0001

Max Gems
800670ccffff

Max Orbs
3006702c00ff

Have Spit Fire Breath
d00683a00020
3006a1c9000f

Unlock All Levels
50000f020000
8006b0840101

Infinite Armor
801ac5560258
801a91ee0258

Infinite Ammo at Weapon Pick-up
8012a5c20063
8012a5ca0063
8012a5da0063
8012a5ee0063
8012a5c60063
8012a6120005

Stop timer lvl 2
801f995808ad

Tail Concerto

Joker Command
D00B5A08 ????

Turbo Joker Command
D00B59E0 ????
800B59E0 0000

Infinite Energy Robo
800CD742 012C

Infinite Health
800CD744 0064

Invincible
800CD756 0025

Stop Timer
800D42E8 0000

Time 00:00:00
800D42E8 0000
800D42EA 0000

Max Whistles
300D42CB 0063

Open All Pictures (GS 2.2 Or Higher Needed!)
50000F01 0000
300D4288 000F

Open Bonus Pictures & Movies & Be At The End Of The Game! (GS 2.2 Or Higher Needed!)
50003301 0000
300D4297 00FF

Infinite Jet Pack Fuel With Black Smoke
800CD742 FFFF

Nintendo64

Fighter's Destiny

P1 Always Have 0 Stars
802097570000

P1 Start W/ Extra Stars
D02097570000
80209757000F

P2 Always Have 0 Stars
8020B61F0000

P2 Start W/ Extra Stars
D020B61F0000
8020B61F000F

P2 FAKE Infinite Energy
802032190028

Chracter Selection Menu Codes
Enable Boro
803073490001

Have 1 Star-Ryuji
8030734E0001

Have 1 Star-Bob
8030734F0001

Have 1 Star-Pierre
803073500001

Have 1 Star-Meiling
803073510001

Have 1 Star-Leon
803073520001

Have 1 Star-Abdul
803073530001

Have 1 Star-Ninja
803073540001

Have 1 Star-Tomahawk
803073550001

Have 1 Star-Valerie
803073560001

Always Win
Judges Decision P1
8020B777FFFF
802098AF0000

Always Win
Judges Decision P2
802098AFFFFF
8020B7770000

Different Writing in
Training Mode
80021E7B00E6
80021E7100E9

Never Get Out Of
Throws (Both Players)
8120668C00FF

Start On Final Stage Vs Com
(Press L + R After
Character Selection Screen)
D0311E910030
802EF67B0009

BGM Modifier (00-0A)
D0309D0F0005

Harvest Moon 64

Infinite Money
811FD60EFFFF

Infinite Watering Can Uses
8016FBCD0004

Infinite Fodder Spout
(Sheep And Cows)
811807140063

Infinite Chicken Feed
80237411005C

Infinite Lumber
81189E5003E7

Infinite Stamina
8018906000FF

Mario Party

Infinite Lives On
Mini-Game Island
800F37BB0063

Start on Turn 21
(Use On Main Menu)
800ED5C90015

Have 50 Mini Island
Games Beaten
800F37BC00FF
800F37BD00FF
800F37BE00FF
800F37BF00FF
800F37C000FF
800F37C100FF
800F37C200FF
800F37C300FF

Infinite Time (Mecha Fly)
800ED74900FF

Mecha Fly Guy Flies For
21 Seconds (191 Spins)
8022623BFFFF

Upper Left Character,
100 Points (Face Lift)
800FCA030064

Slow Motion
800F383F002A

Always Pedaling Bike In
Pedal Power [Note 1]
800FA72000FF

Infinite Time (Face Lift)
800ED744000D

Infinite Time (Coin Block Blitz)
810FA7EE0710

Infinite Time
(Coin Block Bash)
811024F60700

Infinite Time
(Coin Shower Flower)
810FAD3A0710

Press R Button To Reset
Timer To 0 (Bobsled Run)
D00ECE090010
810FF34C0000

R Button Resets Timer
To 60 Seconds (Cast Aways)
D00ECE090010
810FBB548003C

R Button Resets Timer
To 60 Seconds (Bumper Balls)
D00ECE090010
810FCD16003C

Have Fake 255 Stars
(Mushroom Village)
800ED145FFFF

Mecha Fly Guy Speed Up
80226231FFFF

Title Screen Look
800ED14E00FF

Pokémon Stadium

Must Be On
de0004000000

P1 Infinite HP In Battle
All Pokémon
81285a1803e7
8128643803e7

P1 Pokémon 1 Max HP
810ae58603e7

P1 Pokémon 2 Max HP
810ae5da03e7

P1 Pokémon 3 Max HP
810ae62e03e7

P2 Pokémon 1 Max HP
810ae7a203e7

P2 Pokémon 2 Max HP
810ae7f603e7

P2 Pokémon 3 Max HP
810ae84a03e7

P1 Pokémon 1 Inf Spells
810ae580ffff
810ae582ffff

P1 Pokémon 2 Inf Spells
810ae5d4ffff
810ae5d6ffff

P1 Pokémon 3 Inf Spells
810ae628ffff
810ae62affff

P2 Pokémon 1 Inf Spells
810ae79cffff
810ae79effff

P2 Pokémon 2 Inf Spells
810ae7foffff
810ae7f2ffff

P2 Pokémon 3 Inf Spells
810ae844ffff
810ae846ffff

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Samba de Amigo Coming to the US?

Here's a hot little tidbit of information: GameFan has learned that Sega of America is not only contemplating bringing everyone's favorite maraca-shaking dance game, *Samba de Amigo,* to the U.S., but also that Sonic Team's home conversion of the title will **absolutely** make an appearance at E3. Unfortunately, details like the maraca controllers and song licensing may be a problem—but just remember, Sega of America will be showing the game at E3, so anything can (and more than likely will) happen! We'll keep you posted if any new details come our way, but remember: You heard it here first!

Nintendo's President Speaks His Mind

Nintendo of Japan president Hiroshi Yamauchi broke his usual silence and warned Forbes.com that his company's counterattack against Sony's PlayStation 2 will shift the entire game world's center of gravity. In his interview, he was so bold as to say that not only will Nintendo keep a firm grip on the handheld market, but that, with the introduction of the Dolphin, Nintendo will also take back the home console market from Sony and other contenders.

Mr. Yamauchi went on to take a few more pot shots at the competition, referring to PlayStation 2 fans as "the people who dye their hair brown and hang around Tokyo's Akihabara electronics district." Ouch. And what about Microsoft's upcoming X-Box? "Microsoft is an incredible company, but it doesn't know anything about games."

His icy comments aside, Mr. Yamauchi didn't reveal too much about the Dolphin or the Game Boy Advance that we didn't already know. He did slip up at one point, however, and referred to the Project Dolphin as a low-cost DVD player. Has Nintendo perhaps changed its mind about the system's DVD movie playback capabilities? Only time will tell, it seems...

Infogrames Pulls Test Drive Off-Road 3 Over

Those that have been eagerly awaiting the arrival of Infogrames' upcoming Dreamcast racer, *Test Drive Off-Road 3,* can stop waiting—the company has announced that it's ceased development of the Dreamcast version and has refocused its efforts on its other Dreamcast properties.

Sega Appoints New Prez and CEO

Sega of America has promoted former Vice President of Marketing Peter Moore to the position of President and CEO. Shoichiro Irimajiri, president of Sega Enterprises, Ltd. (Sega's Japanese arm), states, "As Sega gears up for a critical year, we know the company will be in good hands with Peter Moore. After we witnessed the incredible launch he orchestrated and experienced his impeccable leadership skills first-hand, we knew there was no better candidate for the job."

Moore's promotion had somewhat of a ripple effect at Sega of America... Shinobu Toyoda is now the Executive Vice President of Content Strategy, Chris Gilbert was promoted to Executive Vice President of Sales, Marketing and Operations and Neal Robison has assumed the role of Vice President of Third-Party Licensing.

And The Beat Goes On...The PS2

Konami of Japan recently announced that it'll port *Beat Mania II DX 3rd Style* to the PlayStation 2, marking the first time the DX series has been ported to a home console system. A *Beat Mania DX* controller for the PS2 is almost a definite to be released with the game.

Rayman 3 for Dolphin?

If you haven't played *Rayman 2* for the Nintendo 64 or Dreamcast, you're sorely missing out... Sorely. Ubi scored a home run with the limbless one's last adventure, and one can only assume that it wouldn't put the li'l guy out to pasture just yet. Ubi Soft has already pledged Dolphin support with such titles as *Dinosaur, Road to El Dorado* and *Batman,* but now acknowledges that *Rayman 3* is on the drawing board as well.

Nintendo of Europe In Hot Water

Did Nintendo of Europe break the law? According the European Commission, it may have... NOE and seven companies that distribute Nintendo products in Europe are facing allegations of disregarding anti-trust laws. The EC's executive body says that "it had sent a so-called statement of objections to the companies warning them that their way of dividing up the market for Nintendo game consoles and video games appeared to break European Commission anti-trust rules by artificially keeping prices higher."

Namco Opens Museum To DC Owners

So you've plunked down two hundred clams for the latest piece of fly video gaming hardware... Are you ready to play *Pac-Man* on it? No, I'm not talking about the mega-polygonal, super-zooming, gigapixel update to the classic Namco spook gobbler, I'm talking about regular ol' 80s *Pac-Man.*

Namco, pleased with the success of *Namco Museum 64* and the *Museum* series on the PlayStation, has decided to bring its collection of yesteryear arcade hits to the DC. Its newest GD-ROM should include *Pole Position, Pac-Man, Ms. Pac-Man* and *Dig-Dug.*

First Details On Capcom's GBA Lineup

Capcom of Japan has confirmed that it's currently working on three Game Boy Advance titles in-house—but what does this mean to you and I, Misters Joe Gamer? Well, if what we're hearing here at GameFan is true, then you might want to run down to your local retailer and pre-order *Resident Evil Game Boy Advance* now... The game doesn't have an official title yet, but the cartridge is expected to launch with the next-generation handheld, and may also be compatible with *Resident Evil 0.*

The other two titles are rumored to include ports of Capcom's *Mega Man* and *Street Fighter* series. We'll keep you posted as more details on these three hot titles surface, but until then, keep your eyes here!

Is That Your Final Answer, Sony?

Finally, Regis has come back to the PlayStation...

O.K., so Mr. Philbin's arrival on the PS may not be as dramatic as The People's Champion's intro each Monday night on "Raw," but man, oh, man, are we excited to see him coming to the PSX! Sony announced today that it will release a "Who Wants to be A Millionaire?" CD for the PlayStation this summer.

How the PlayStation will use the "Phone a Friend" lifeline is still unknown...

Team17 Makes Worms World Party Official

Team17, developers of the office favorite *Worms* series, has announced *Worms World Party* for PC and Dreamcast. The game presents *Worms* in the most online-focused version yet, with multi-player games and missions developed specifically with online play in mind. This means co-operative and confrontational multi-player missions, new multi-player game modes and much, much more.

Sega of Japan Pinches Pennies

Considering the sweet success of the Dreamcast on these shores, Sega of America's swimming in dough... Across the P, however, Sega of Japan's still huffing and puffing through its little game of catch-up. According to the Nihon Kezai Shimbun, a Japanese newspaper, Sega Enterprises has announced that it will/must slice costs by more than 30 billion yen this fiscal year (ending March 2001) if it wants to be profitable. What's gonna be axed? For starters, sales promotions expenses (no more *Space Channel 5*-style blitzes?), arcades, research and development (does this make you nervous, too?) and about 1,000 jobs.



Tales Of The Hardcore

We all have our vices in life. For some <ahem HiFi> it's an overly priced replica of Schwarzeneggar's Conan sword (we'll save that twisted tale for a later installment) and for others like myself, I'm still searching for a full sized Cylon outfit from *Battlestar Galactica* (my parents made me reuse my Skeletor Halloween costume for six years straight). To each his own I always say—and for good reason. If I consulted my parents for each one of my ridiculous purchases, I'm certain they'd have me institutionalized. And speaking of madness, get a load of Kodomo's most recent eBay purchase, a $318 Biohazard Pellet Gun.



Yes friends, Kodomo's been down this hardcore road before ($117 on a *Robotech* poster) and at this rate, he'll be the subject of many a hardcore story to come. Other than shooting small projectiles at 365 feet per second, this official Raccoon City firearm can sit still in a corner or be used to weigh down important paperwork like Kodomo's neglected college loan certificates. But in all fun, Cerberus and I decided to compile a list of ten things Kodomo could do with his recently purchased excuse to move out of his parents' house.



$318.00

HARDCORE METER

SUBJECT: Kodomo

USELESS ITEM: *BioHazard* airsoft replica gun

NUMBER OF USES: One—soon. He's scouring eBay for a larger clip, and mumbling something about ECM...

1) Don full *Resident Evil* gear and try to blend in with the SWAT teams in Downtown L.A. in hopes of getting in on "some of the action."
2) Convince ECM to buy one and start an Angry Surly Man Club. They're short, they're angry **and** they're surly!
3) Attend the Euro 2000 (soccer tournament) to make sure England wins.
4) Re-post it on eBay and get half of what he paid.
5) Sell it to Fury and get double what he paid.
5) Use the C02 canisters for "recreational purposes."
6) Shoot out his car tires and force Fury to drive to lunch... or just force Fury to drive at gunpoint.
7) Go back to Cuba and reclaim that little kid.
8) Melt it down and craft an *RE* billy club.
9) Shoot himself (or Fury) when he see's this article.
10) Kidnap the creator of Red Bull™ and steal his secret formula... water and crack.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

It's come to our attention that numerous websites have reported that Sega has inked a deal with Acclaim to publish popular Sega titles like *Crazy Taxi*, *Ferrari F-355*, and *Zombie Revenge* on... PS2?! What, was it a slow day for news at videogames.com?

Granted, Sega has been taking huge losses in Japan every fiscal quarter. But who honestly believes that the company would publish its own titles on a direct competitor's console? We can only **speculate** on what the guys who started this silly Internet rumor were thinking...

News Guy 1: Things have got to be pretty bad at Sega of Japan right now...

News Guy 2: Yeah, they're probably having problems paying the electricity bill.

News Guy 1: Yup, you know they're thinking of ways to make some quick cash just to patch up that leaky ceiling right now.

News Guy 2: Uh huh, the company's so desperate it would probably... <spots a copy of *Crazy Taxi* lying next to a PlayStation 2> publish *Crazy Taxi* on PS2... just to make enough money to pay off the roofer.

News Guy 1: No, we can't have Sega publish its own games on PS2. That looks too absurd... Let's use Acclaim. They're hurting for profits right now also.

News Guy 2: Brilliant! Have it ready for today's update. We should be writing Hollywood scripts...

What's next, guys, *Sonic Adventure* on Dolphin... or Game Boy Advance? Why not? It could happen, right? That's the beauty of the Internet—there's no one out there to keep people in check or to quash obviously false rumors... which is why we feel the need to set the record straight.

Jeff Barnhart

Producer, Crave Entertainment

My previous games include:

Interplay Productions:
Producer: *VR Sports Powerboat Racing* (PlayStation & PC), *Jimmy Johnson's VR Football '99* (PlayStation), *VR Baseball Hardware Accelerated* (PC), *Virtual Tennis* (PC), *Virtual Deep Sea Fishing* (PC), *Descent 3* (PC), and *Giants* (PC).

Crave Entertainment:
Producer: *Galerians* (PlayStation), *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* (DC).

Current work:
Ultimate Fighting Championship (PlayStation & Dreamcast), *Draconus: Cult of the Wyrm* (Dreamcast).

Hobbies:
Playing video games, driving the VP of Development's Porsche, traveling to new places, meeting new people, and buying anything that has cool new technology in it.

Current games that I can't put down:
Dead or Alive 2, Counter Strike, and *Soldier of Fortune.*





THE POSTMEISTER

Write to me, I'm running for president!!!
The Postmeister
6301 DeSoto Avenue Suite E
Woodland Hills, CA 91367

HEY, IT'S OUR #1 FAN!

Dear Postmeister,

I'm a longtime fan of you and GameFan magazine (but mostly you!). Well, anyway, I'd like to know some facts about certain titles and series of different companies.

1) Is Capcom ever going to come out with a decent RPG like *Legend of Legaia* that is about Mega Man?

2) Why does Nintendo emphasize really sucky games like *Pokémon Stadium* but not the awesome ones that it would make millions off of, like *Harvest Moon*?

3) When is *Legend of Mana* coming out?

Your #1 fan,
Jeff Hounsell
London, Ontario

Jeff,

Let's get the easy stuff out of the way first... Legend of Mana is already on shelves, chief. It's a damn good game, too, so go pick yourself up one. As far as a Mega Man RPG from Capcom goes, well, let's hope the answer to your query is "never." I can understand your desire to see this little blue fella take off on an epic quest; the potential product could be very exciting. But then, I remember how many of the past Mega Man games have blown chunks, and I hope that Capcom forges forward with some tasty new titles. It's all about Onimusha, Jeff.

Your second question is one that I wrestle with daily. Despite my increasing powers and growing flock, I am unable to do anything about the devil spawn known as Pokémon. All of us here at GameFan agree that Harvest Moon may be one of the best and most under-appreciated games on the system, but the sad fact is that, even with the proper backing, HM will never post sales figures like Pokémon. Besides, Nintendo does not make HM, Natsume does, and it could never pony up the kind of marketing budget needed to promote the title. I have learned in my many years that life is cruel and unjust. This is why we need people like you, Jeff—people that are ready to stand up for the little games that get lost under the tank treads of bloated behemoths that are interested only in the almighty dollar and not the noble pursuit of the hard-core.

WEAKSAUCE GAMERS 101

Dear [all true video gamers out there]:

I didn't know who to write this to, since it is dealing with the magazine you guys have. I have a major problem that I feel needs to be heard. I mean to say this with the utmost respect, but what are you guys on? In your June 2000 issue of GameFan, I looked through the pages and came across the reviews of *Perfect Dark* and *Strider 2*. Let me ask you this: How is it that some fighter PlayStation title that no one ever heard of gets the Game of the Month, and *Perfect Dark* doesn't? I'm not biased against PlayStation or any other platform, because I own them all. But this is just ridiculous. Looking at the three different reviews for Perfect Dark, you guys gave it 86%, 89% and 89%. Meanwhile, nearly a dozen other magazines have given *Perfect Dark* NOTHING LESS than 96%. I believe that the people working the magazine are PC and Sony/Sega lovers. Come on. *Strider 2* takes the game of the month? I bet you haven't even played through *Perfect Dark* enough to give it a solid review, and it seems you haven't played the multi-player either, because there is no mention of it in your review. Please don't take this letter and just delete it, I would really like a response concerning the issue I have brought up. Thanks.

Steve Osborne,
Video Game Source

Steve,

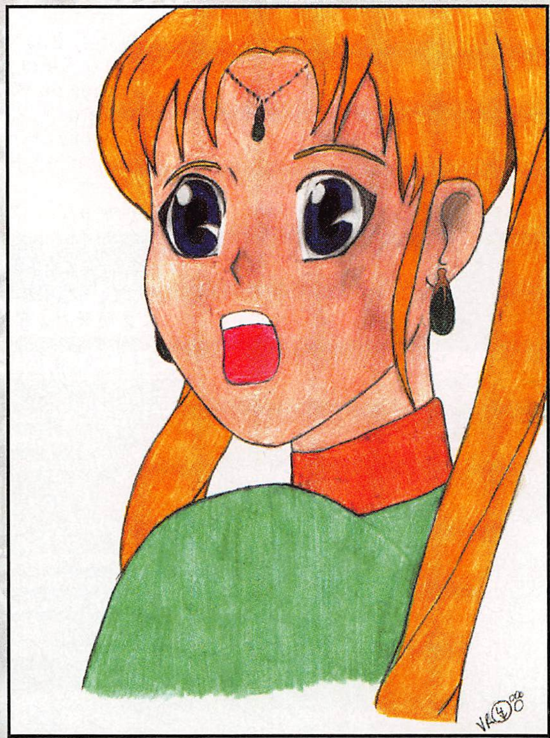
That is one source on video games I won't be consulting.

Anyway, I didn't realize that a game's quality was based on how high-profile it is/was... That would mean that Blasto must be better than Monster Rancher... or that Tomb Raider was designed better than Devil Dice. Spoken like a true mainstream gamer... ECM just went into a seizure.

As for our scores, well, clearly, we must have made a mistake. I think Fury forgot to carry a "1" somewhere; that would have raised the scores to 96, 99 and 99. Is that better? While we're at it, let us make sure we change our name to GameFollower: the magazine for those that have no opinion of their own.

Bottom line: Strider 2 has the best control and gameplay of any game this year, while Perfect Dark has frame-rate issues that directly affect one's ability to play. And what were those scores we gave Perfect Dark again? 89, 89 and 86? Sounds pretty good to me...

You must be a member of the Cobra Kai... "Sweep the leg, Johnny."



On the open market, in Canada, a picture like this can get as much as $8.65. Here on the streets of L.A., though, a pic like this can easily go for $8.75.

A CHALLENGE?

Posty,

So you think your style is unstoppable, eh? Don't forget about the feared Ferret Stance, taught by Poe-Fu Monkey and my buddies Plokoon and Sliptoo. NOW GO FOR BROKE!!!

Poe-Fu Monkey
hypeblue78@hotmail.com

Dear Poe-Fu Monkey,

I have heard of this Ferret Stance you speak of, and look forward to seeing it in action. Having perfected my new technique, Ninja Looting, while playing Tenchu 2, I feel I have all of the weapons necessary to best you... not to mention the unstoppable force of the PTFIF and the dreaded STB.

YOU SHOULD TALK TO STEVE...

Dear Postmeister:

I appreciate most of your gaming previews and reviews. They do not always affect my final judgment, but they allow me to make more informed decisions. All of the people at GameFan do not have the same interests as mine, so I understand that sometimes what you see as a good game may not be so fun to me. I also see that a pessimistic viewpoint in reviews is more beneficial to people because, if you said that a game was awesome, then that might influence someone to shell out forty or fifty dollars for a game that totally sucks! That's why I become aggravated at people who get mad when you give a bad review to a game they love. So what if you give a game a bad rating?! It is their responsibility to determine what I see as fun. I happen to love *FF Tactics*, and am looking forward to *Vagrant Story*. I didn't like *FFVIII*, but then again, I consider myself a hard-core RPG fan, and don't like the focus on visual effects vs. gameplay. Everyone around me loves sports and racing games. Not for me!!! We all have different preferences in the realm of video games. So everyone who doesn't like how a magazine reviews a game, SHUT UP! You are wasting valuable time.

Posty, keep up the good work!

Ashley Kennedy

Dear Ashley,

Amen!

CONKER QUERY

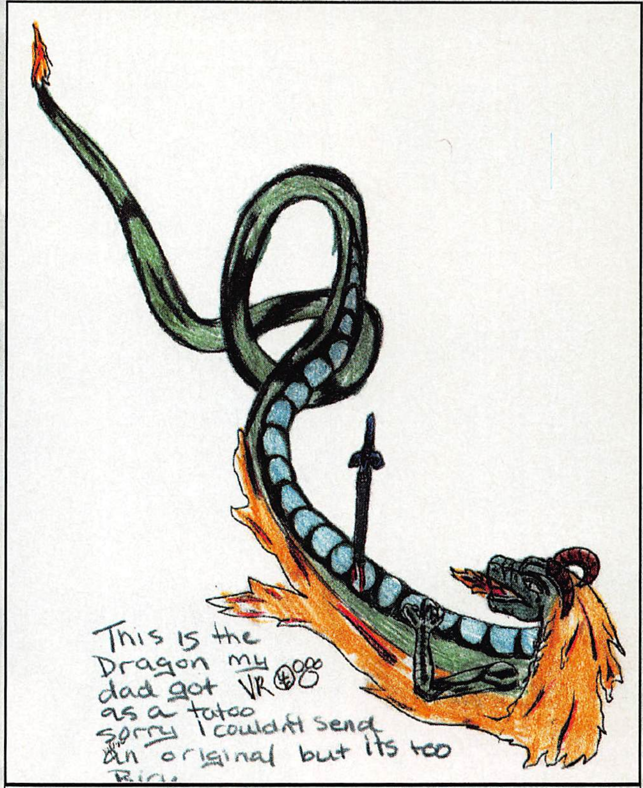
Hey, Posty!

How ya doing? I'm not going to "rant" at you—you're too good a Posty to do that! Well, seeing as I'm writing, you know "by-the-by," I was wondering if I could have some lessons in the dark and ancient art of... post-fu? No? Well, failing that, you could always answer my question (this option would probably be easier anyway, as I'm sure post-fu is far too complex to understand, eh?). Back to the question: I've got an N64—the Fun Machine (patent pending). I'm an avid fan of anything that Rare does, but I'm confused about one title, namely *Conker: Two Hundred Tails/Bad Hair/Fur Day/Big Adventure Quest*—or whatever they decide to call it. What's the deal with that? I've heard things saying it's going to be some 18+ gore fest with doors telling you to "go away" in so many words, rude gestures—the whole lot. Posty, do you know the truth? Please tell me.

Matt Nicholson
Via The Matrix

Ahhh, Matt,

The truth is always complicated, my little gwai-lo... This whole Conker thing is kind of a joke in the industry. I equate it to the introduction of Poochie the Dog to the "Itchy & Scratchy Show." Nintendo saw that it needed to 'hip up' its lineup with some products geared for the older audience—and yet, while it may very well be a fantastic title (it is Rare, after all), I remain skeptical. Making the main character a bad seed with a worse mouth does not translate into a good game, and I can see this game's schtick getting very old very fast. As far as not being able to learn the disciplines of the Post-Fu, well, nothing is ever too complicated if you are strong of will and free of spirit—and have an ample supply of frozen food and the taste-bud-tantalizing waffle chip.



What Virginia neglected to tell us is that this is the second tattoo her father has gotten based on one of her drawings. Across his chest is a tat of the whole Sailor Moon cast.

THE FATHER—DAUGHTER SAUSAGE COMBO

Hey, Posty,

I am a teen that loves to draw (you ready for this)... anime! I started drawing this when I was 9 years old (I'm now 14). I have been reading GameFan for quite some time now, and started collecting it at the beginning of 2000 (kind of a New Year's resolution), but I missed the January issue. When I buy GameFan, I draw pictures out of it because you guys choose the best anime pictures. I didn't show anyone my drawings until one day when my friend was going through my binder and she found an anime picture that I had drawn. She said [she'd pay] me to draw [her] like that. So I did, and she gave me $8.65. I drew the dragon off the *Legend of Zelda: OOT* cover, and my dad really liked it a lot, so I gave it to him for Christmas, and for his present [to me] he came home 3 hours later... he got it done as a tattoo on his arm. I was so surprised! It is very cool to have something that I have drawn put on a human.

Thank you very much,

Virginia Rogers
Somewhere in Canada

Dear Virginia,

We like your drawings too, so we have decided to put them in the mag. You and your dad may be the first ever father/daughter sausage team in our history! As I read your letter, though, I couldn't help but ponder a few nagging questions... For starters, was that $8.65 U.S. or Canadian? Also, are all Canadian tattoo parlors open on Christmas? Finally, if I forced Shidoshi to cover his body with tattoos of your drawings—kind of like an anime "Illustrated Man"—would I be able to predict the future of gaming sausages worldwide by simply gazing into his many colorful tats? Or would he just be a tat-covered freak-boy? Oh, and your copy of our January issue is on its way, courtesy of the one and only Posty. Ciao...


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Sega Dreamcast
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